AUTHORITY AND DOMINION

Volume 1

AUTHORITY AND DOMINION

AN ECONOMIC COMMENTARY ON EXODUS

Volume 1
Part 1: Representation and Dominion

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Part 1: Representation and Dominion
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This book is dedicated to

Julian Russell

the most rhetorically gifted pastor I ever had.

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PREFACE

This book was originally the first section of volume 2 of my series, *An Economic Commentary on the Bible*. The focus of this volume is on those aspects of Exodus 1–19 that relate to economics. Nevertheless, it is broader than a narrowly defined economic analysis, for biblical economics is broader than strictly economic analysis. The early nineteenth-century term, "political economy," is closer to the biblical norm for economics; the late eighteenth-century term, "moral philosophy," is closer yet.

It would be unwise for me to repeat the foundational material that I covered in *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis*. In that book, I made the strongest case that I could for the existence of a uniquely Christian economics, especially with respect to epistemology: "What can we know, and how can we know it?" This volume is based on the epistemological foundation laid down in *Sovereignty and Dominion*. For those who are uninterested in epistemology—and there are a lot of you in this category—I can only restate my original position: it is not that there is a meaningful Christian economics among all other economic schools of thought; it is that there is *only* Christian economics. There is no other sure foundation of true knowledge except the Bible. The only firmly grounded economics is Christian economics. All non-Christian approaches are simply imitations of the truth: imitations that cannot be logically supported, given their own first principles concerning God, man, law, and knowledge. Biblical economics is therefore at war epistemologically with all other economic systems.

We can see this in the conflict between Moses and Pharaoh. This conflict was a conflict which involved every aspect of life, including economics. We need to understand the theological issues that divided Egypt from Israel in order to understand similarly divisive

approaches to economics and political theory today. Economic disagreements today are closely related to the same theological divisions that separated Moses from Pharaoh.

There is no doubt that Pharaoh knew some things about economics. If we do not assume this, we can make no sense of his actions. He also knew a great deal about biblical law. But this knowledge only led to his condemnation, just as it does in the case of all other forms of non-Christian knowledge. The anti-Christians have enough knowledge to condemn them eternally, but not enough to construct a progressive long-term civilization. They have occasionally constructed long-term static civilizations, most notably Egypt and China, but only through the imposition of tyranny.[1]

A. Using Humanists to Defeat Humanism

Similarly, modern economists have considerable knowledge about the workings of the market and the failures associated with all forms of central economic planning. But again and again, the officially neutral, value-free economists appeal to biblical notions of peace and prosperity. The idea of value-free science is a myth. So, it is time to take up where Moses left off: with a challenge to humanistic economics.

Readers will find that I cite the writings of many economists and social thinkers. I use their insights—insights that are *stolen from the Bible* when they are correct. When men come to conclusions that are also the conclusions of the Bible, we should use their discoveries. These discoveries are our property, not theirs. God owns the world; the devil owns nothing. We are God's adopted children; they are God's disinherited children. Therefore, I am quite willing to cite secular scholars at length, since I know that most readers have neither the time nor access to the sources to follow up on every idea. I do not expect the majority of my readers to master the intricate details of every scholar's argument, nor master my refutations or applications of their insights.

When we read Christian refutations of this or that writer in books written a generation ago, let alone a century or a millennium ago, we find that the reading is slow going. "Why did the authors spend so much space dealing with such dead issues?" we ask ourselves. The answer is simple: because when the books were written, those issues were not dead. Similarly, a hundred years from now, any readers who

1. Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1957).

may stumble across this book will skim over most of its extended quotations. Few works of scholarship in one generation survive into the next, and the writers I cite or refute will be long-forgotten for the most part. Indeed, many of them are not well-known today. I am not devoting time simply to refute every erroneous idea in sight; I am using these citations as examples, as springboards to introduce explicitly biblical interpretations. The scholars I cite are very often foils for me; I want readers to know that such ideas exist and need refuting or reinterpreting.

The most important thing is how well I integrate such humanistic insights into my biblical reconstruction of economics, without (1) losing the importance of these insights or (2) becoming a slave of the humanist presuppositions which officially undergird such insights. But this is the most important task in any field. Every Christian faces this problem. We buy and sell with pagans in many marketplaces, and one of these marketplaces is the marketplace for ideas. We must use their best ideas against them, and we must expose their worst ideas in order to undermine men's confidence in them. In short, in God's universe, it is a question of "heads, we win; tails, they lose."

B. The Outrage of the Christian Classroom Compromisers

It is important to understand from the beginning that the perspective expounded in this book is unpopular in academic Christian circles. Two economic ideas dominate the thinking of the modern world: the idea of central economic planning, and the idea of the "mixed economy," meaning interventionism by the civil government into the economy: Keynesianism, fascism, or the corporate state. Men have had great confidence in the economic wisdom of the state, at least until the 1970s. Most Christian academics in the social sciences still go along enthusiastically with some variant of this statist ideology. Thus, when they are confronted with what the Bible *really* teaches in the field of political economy, they react in horror.

Most amusingly, one of these interventionists has accused me of holding Enlightenment ideas,[2] not realizing that he and his associates are the true heirs of the dominant Enlightenment tradition, the tradition which exalts the state. When these "radical Christian" critics think "Enlightenment," they think "Adam Smith." They obviously do

2. Ronald Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger,* rev. ed. (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, [1977] 1984), p. 102.

not understand the Enlightenment. When we look at the historical results of the Enlightenment, we should think "French Revolution, Russian Revolution, and President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal." We should think "the glorification of the state."

The Enlightenment had its right wing, of course, and Adam Smith was in it, but he was heavily influenced by the moral ideals of Deism, which were in turn a pale reflection of Christian theism.[3] But this individualistic tradition barely survived the revolutionary and statist Enlightenment heritage. What the successful bearers of the torch of the Enlightenment did was to set Europe on fire—in the name of liberty, fraternity, and equality. James Billington's book has described it well: *Fire in the Minds of Men* (1980). It was the left wing of the Enlightenment which triumphed. When men deify mankind, they almost always wind up deifying the state, the highest collective of mankind, the apotheosis of man's power. They become adherents of the power religion.

I reject all Enlightenment thought. This is why I reject most of what is taught in your typical Christian college. The baptized humanism of the modern Christian college classroom, especially in the social sciences and humanities, has led many people astray. This is one reason why I wrote my little book, *75 Bible Questions Your Instructors Pray You Won't Ask* (1984). It is subtitled, "How to Spot Humanism in the Classroom and the Pulpit." There is a lot of it to spot. The book is an antidote to baptized humanism.

What the typical Christian college course in the social sciences teaches is left-wing Enlightenment thought: naïve Kantianism, warmed-over Darwinism, armchair Marxism (especially his theory of class consciousness and the innate disharmony of interests), and the discarded economic policies of some Presidential administration of a decade and a half earlier. It is all taught in the name of Jesus, in the interests of "Christian social concern" and "relevant Christianity." They fight that great bugaboo of 1880–1900, Social Darwinism (which hardly anyone has ever believed in), in the name of Christianity, but they do so by means of the same arguments that the founders of the dominant intellectual stream, Darwinian central planning, used against the Social Darwinists.[4] They advocate the conclusions of

3. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), with a new introduction by E. G. West (Indianapolis, Indiana: Liberty Classics, 1976).

4. The best introduction to the history of this subject is Sidney Fine, *Laissez Faire and the General-Welfare State: A Study of Conflict in American Thought, 1865–1901* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956).

the really dangerous brand of Darwinism—the social Darwinism of the planning elite[5]—in the name of Christianity.

The hue and cry against my explicitly revelational Christian economics has been raised in the unread little journals of the Christian academic community.[6] What has offended them most is the heavy reliance I place on Old Testament law. On this point, they are in agreement with the antinomian pietists: all such laws are no longer binding.[7]

Why this hostility to Old Testament law, or even New Testament "instructions"? Because Old Testament law categorically rejects the use of taxes to promote statist social welfare programs. It categorically rejects the idea of state power in coercive wealth-redistribution programs. Samuel warned the people against raising up a king, for the king would take 10% of their income (I Sam. 8:15, 17). He promised that the state would, in short, extract the equivalent of God's tithe from the hapless citizenry. Today, most modern industrial civil governments extract four to five times God's tithe. The tax policies of the modern welfare state are therefore immoral. More than this: they are demonic.

"Proof texting, proof texting!" cry the church-attending Darwinists of the college classroom. ("Proof texting" apparently means citing a biblical passage which undercuts their position.) These men think that John Maynard Keynes' *General Theory* (which, in fact, they have never read, since practically no one ever has, so convoluted are its language and arguments) is the essence of permanent truth, on a par with Newton's *Principia* (which they also have never read). On

5. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), Appendix A.*

6. See, for example, the essay by Thomas E. Van Dahm, professor of economics at Carthage College (which I had never before heard of), "The Christian Far Right and the Economic Role of the State," *Christian Scholars Review*, XII (1983), pp. 17–36. He presented another diatribe, this time against the biblical case for the gold standard, to *The Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, XXXVII (March 1984): "The Christian Far Right and Economic Policy Issues." This journal originally devoted its space to essays critical of the six-day creation position, but then it branched out, publishing articles that deny the legitimacy of applying Old Testament biblical standards in many other academic areas besides geology and biology.

7. Van Dahm wrote: "This article did not deal with the basic issue of whether Old Testament laws and even New Testament 'instructions' are binding on Christians—and others—in contemporary society. A recent treatment of this issue, offering a definite 'no' answer I found persuasive is Walter J. Chantry's *God's Righteous Kingdom*. . . ." p. 35, footnote 44. Here we have it: the defenders of power religion (statist planning) join hands with the defenders of escapist religion (antinomian pietism) in their opposition to dominion religion (biblical law).

the other hand, they regard the Old Testament as "the Word of God (emeritus)."

Perhaps the most notable example of this sort of thinking is the "Keynesian-Christian" economist, Professor (emeritus) Douglas Vickers. He adopted Keynes' economic theories in the name of Jesus, but he did not adopt Keynes' economy of language. He did his best to refute my approach to economics with arguments such as this one: "...it is the economist's task so to understand the deeper determinants of economic conjectures and affairs that his policy prescriptions can be intelligently and properly shaped toward their proper ordering, or, where it is considered necessary, their correction and resolution. This should be done in such a way as to accord with the demands of both those deeper causal complexes now perceived in the light of God's word and purpose, and the require ments and basic desiderata of economic thought and administration."[8] This is what he substituted for "Thus saith the Lord!" His book did not go into a second printing. I can understand why not.

These scholars regard the Old Testament as a kind of discarded first draft. Now that God has wisely seen fit to revise it (that is, now that He has completely replaced it), they argue, it is wrong to appeal to it as the basis for the construction of a Christian social order.[9] But Christian Reconstructionists continue to appeal to all Old Testament laws that have not been explicitly revised by the New Testament. So, the classroom scholars are outraged; they are incensed; they threaten to hold their breath until they turn blue if Reconstructionists keep writing books like this one. They have sounded the alarm. But nobody pays much attention to them. This enrages them even more. Their temper tantrums probably will get even worse. It is best to ignore them. They have bet on the wrong horse—the welfare state—and they resent anyone who tries to embarrass, let alone shoot, this aging horse.

C. The End of an Era

The fires of the Enlightenment are beginning to burn low. The civilization of the Enlightenment is losing confidence in its own principles. Perhaps even more important, *it is beginning to lose faith in the future*. The American historian-sociologist Robert Nisbet put it well:

8. Douglas Vickers, *Economics and Man: Prelude to a Christian Critique* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1976), p. 90.

9. See, for example, Vickers' remarks to this effect: *ibid.*, pp. 47–48.

> It was belief in the sacred and the mythological that in the beginning of Western history made possible belief in and assimilation of ideas of time, history, development, and either progress or regress. Only on the basis of confidence in the existence of divine power was confidence possible with respect to design or pattern in the world and in the history of the world. . . .
>
> But it is absent now, whether ever to be recovered, we cannot know. And with the absence of the sense of sacredness of knowledge there is now to be seen in more and more areas absence of real respect for or confidence in knowledge—that is, the kind of knowledge that proceeds from reason and its intrinsic disciplines. From the Enlightenment on, an increasing number of people came to believe that reason and its works could maintain a momentum and could preserve their status in society with no influence save which they themselves generated. But the present age of the revolt against reason, of crusading irrationalism, of the almost exponential development and diffusion of the occult, and the constant spread of narcicissm and solipsism make evident enough how fallible were and are the secular foundations of modern thought. It is inconceivable that faith in either progress as a historical reality or in progress as a possibility can exist for long, to the degree that either concept does exist at the present moment, amid such alien and hostile intellectual forces.[10]

The leaders of this staggering humanist civilization have now adopted the strategy of every dying civilization which has ever lost the confidence of its citizens: they resort to the exercise of raw power. This was the strategy of the Roman Empire, and it failed.[11] This *substitution of power for ethics* is the essence of the satanic delusion. It is the essence of the power religion. It also is the essence of failure.

What will replace this phase of humanist civilization? Some version of the society which Solzhenitsyn called the Gulag Archipelago? As a form of judgment, this is possible. God used Assyria and Babylon as rods of iron to bring Israel to repentance. Or will it be the steady grinding down of freedom by the West's massive bureaucracies? This was Max Weber's vision of the future of the West, and it is not a pretty picture.[12] It has also come progressively true ever since he wrote his warnings from 1905 to 1920. Or will it be a new society based on a religious revival? Nisbet saw this as a real possibility: "Much more probable, I believe, is the appearance of yet another

10. Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), p. 355.

11. Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1944] 1957). Reprinted by Liberty Fund.

12. Gary North, "Max Weber: Rationalism, Irrationalism, and the Bureaucratic Cage," in North (ed.), *Foundations of Christian Scholarship: Essays in the Van Til Perspective* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, 1976).

full-blown 'awakening,' even a major religious reformation. For some time now we have been witnessing what might properly be called the beginnings of such a transformation, beginnings which range from popular to scholarly, from eruptions of fundamentalism, pentecostalism—and, even within the Jewish, Roman Catholic and Protestant establishments, millennialism—all the way to what has to be regarded as a true efflorescence of formal theology."[13]

The time has come for a program of Christian reconstruction. Something new must replace humanism, from the bottom up, in every sphere of human existence. The dominion religion must replace the power religion. Humanism's world is disintegrating, both intellectually and institutionally, and it will drag the compromised Christian academic world into the abyss with it. That is where they both belong. Weep not for their passing. And if you happen to spot some aspect of humanism which is beginning to wobble, take an appropriate action. Push it.

D. Liberation from the State

Liberation theologians in the 1970s and 1980s kept appealing to the Book of Exodus as their very special book. Michael Walzer's study of Exodus called this assertion into question. Walzer's earlier studies of the Puritan revolution established him as an authority in the field. His study of Exodus argues that this story has affected politics in the West, especially radical politics, for many centuries. But it is a story which does not fit the model used by liberation theologians, whose enemy is the free market social order. As he said, the Israelites "were not the victims of the market but of the state, the absolute monarchy of the pharaohs. Hence, Samuel's warning to the elders of Israel against choosing a king. . . . Egyptian bondage was the bondage of a people to the arbitrary power of the state."[14]

The misuse of the exodus story by liberation theologians is another example of the misuse of the Bible generally to promote anti-biblical social, political, and economic views. This is why practical commentaries dealing with specific disciplines are needed. The Bible still commands great authority, and this public perception of the Bible's authority is increasing, especially regarding social issues. This willingness on the part of social critics to appeal to the Bible is itself a major break with the recent past, yet a return to a more distant past.

13. Nisbet, *op. cit.*, p. 357.
14. Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), p. 30.

Prior to 1660, it was common for conservatives and radicals to appeal to the Bible to defend their visions of a righteous social order. Almost overnight, in 1660, this appeal to the Bible ended. Defenders of the free market appealed to logic or experience rather than "debatable" religious or moral views.[15] Socialists and reformers also dropped their appeal to the Bible after 1660, again, almost overnight. Shafarevich wrote: "The development of socialist ideas did not cease, of course. On the contrary, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, socialist writings literally flooded Europe. But these ideas were produced by different circumstances and by men of a different mentality. The preacher and the wandering Apostle gave way to a publicist and philosopher. Religious exaltation and references to revelation were replaced by appeals to reason. The literature of socialism acquired a purely secular and rationalistic character; new means of poularization were devised: works on this theme now frequently appear under the guise of voyages to unknown lands, interlarded with frivolous episodes."[16]

The exodus was a time of liberation—liberation from the statist social order that had been created by adherents of the power religion. The spiritual heirs of those statist Egyptians are now coming before the spiritual heirs of the Israelites with a new claim: the need to be liberated from the institutions of the once-Christian West. They offer chains in the name of liberation, bureaucracy in the name of individual freedom, and central economic planning in the name of prosperity. They offer men a return to power religion in the name of the God of the Bible. What this commentary offers, in contrast, is a call for men to return to dominion religion—the religion of biblical orthodoxy.

E. How to Read this Book

There is an old line that asks: "How do you eat an elephant?" The answer: "One bite at a time." That rule should be applied to this book.

This is a detailed book. Some of its chapters are lengthy, but they are broken down into convenient sections and subsections. The idea is not to memorize each chapter. The idea is to get a general sense of what happens in the field of economics when rival religions clash:

15. William Letwin, *The Origins of Scientific Economics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1963), ch. 6.

16. Igor Shafarevich, *The Socialist Phenomenon* (New York: Harper & Row, [1975] 1980), pp. 80–81.

power religion vs. *dominion religion*. If you want to follow up on any particular idea, footnotes are provided at no extra charge at the bottom of the page, so that you will not spend extra time flipping to the back of the book. Footnotes are there to help you, not to intimidate you.

Read the conclusions of each chapter before you read the chapter. Then skim over it rapidly. If it seems worth your time, reread it more carefully. You can read this book a chapter at a time, since it is a commentary. It deals with one or two verses at a time. The book develops its chain of arguments only insofar as the verses show a progression. I think they do reveal a progression, but not so rigorous a progression as you would find in a logic textbook, or even an economics textbook (Keynes' *General Theory* excluded, since it substitutes confusion for progression).[17]

Subsequent sections of this commentary on Exodus will cover the Ten Commandments and the biblical case laws that apply the principles of the Ten Commandments to society.[18]

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17. One of the reasons why I am sure that his *General Theory* is a classic example of deliberate "disinformation" is that most of Keynes' other books are models of logic and clarity. But the *General Theory* is nearly unreadable. He was writing nonsense, and the book reflects it. For a good introduction to this classic example of jargon-filled nonsense, see Henry Hazlitt's book, *The Failure of the "New Economics"* (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1959). Hazlitt never went to college, so he was not fooled by Keynes, something two generations of Ph.D.-holding power religionists cannot say for themselves. For more technical scholarly critiques, written quite early in response to Keynes by economists who were not power religionists, see Hazlitt (ed.), *The Critics of Keynesian Economics* (Van Nostrand, 1960).

18. See also James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant: An Exposition of Exodus 21–23* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1984).

INTRODUCTION

This book is about a clash between two religions, with believers in a third religion standing on the sidelines, waiting to see the outcome of the clash. The Bible presents the story of Moses and Pharaoh as the archetypal clash in history between these two religions: dominion religion vs. power religion. This confrontation has been going on ever since the garden of Eden.

The first of the conflicting religions was power religion, the religion of Pharaoh, who was Satan's representative in the battle. The second was dominion religion, the religion of Moses, God's representative in this mighty battle. The testimony of the Book of Exodus is clear: first, *those who seek power apart from God are doomed to comprehensive, total defeat*. Second, those who seek God are called to exercise dominion, and they shall be victorious over the enemies of God. But this victory takes time. It is not achieved instantaneously. It is the product of long years of *self-discipline under God's authority*. The power religionists do not want to wait. Like Adam in his rebellion, sinners choose to dress themselves in the robes of authority, so that they can render instant autonomous judgment.[1] They do not want to subordinate themselves to God.

The third form of religion is what I call escapist religion. This religion proclaims the inevitability of external defeat for the corporate people of God. The defenders of temporal corporate impotence for covenant-keepers thereby become the allies of temporal power-seekers. This religion was dominant in the lives of the Hebrew slaves. They became easy prey for the power religionists. But when the power manifested by dominion religion overcame the pagan power religion, they grudgingly followed the victors.

Before discussing the specifics of the clash between Moses and Pharaoh, it is necessary to survey briefly the first principles of these three religious outlooks.

A. Power Religion

This religious viewpoint affirms that the most important goal for a man, group, or species is the capture and maintenance of power. Power is seen as the chief attribute of God, or if the religion is officially atheistic, then the chief attribute of man. This perspective is a satanic perversion of God's command to man to exercise dominion over all the creation (Gen. 1:26–28).[2] *Power religion is the attempt to exercise dominion apart from covenantal subordination to the true Creator God*.

What distinguishes biblical dominion religion from satanic power religion is *ethics*. Is the person who seeks power doing so for the glory of God, and for himself secondarily, and only to the extent that he is God's lawful and covenantally faithful representative? If so, he will act in terms of God's ethical standards and in terms of a profession of faith in the God of the Bible. The church has recognized this two-fold requirement historically, and has established a dual requirement for membership: profession of faith and a godly life.

In contrast, power religion is a religion of autonomy. It affirms that "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (Deut. 8:17).[3] It seeks power or wealth in order to make credible this very claim.

Wealth and power are aspects of both religions. Wealth and power are covenantal manifestations of the success of rival religious views. This is why God warns His people not to believe that their autonomous actions gained them their blessings: "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (Deut. 8:18).[4] God's opponents also want visible confirmation of the validity of their covenant with a rival god, but God warns them that "the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (Prov. 13:22b).[5] The entry of the Hebrews into Canaan was supposed to remind them of this fact: the Canaanites had built homes and vineyards to no avail; their enemies, the Hebrews, inherited them (Josh. 24:13).

Those who believe in power religion have refused to see that long-term wealth in any society is the product of ethical conformity to

2. *Ibid.*, chaps. 3, 4.

3. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012) ch. 21.

4. *Ibid.*, ch. 22.

5. Gary North, *Wisdom and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Proverbs*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2007] 2012), ch. 41.

biblical law. They have sought the blessings of God's covenant while denying the validity and eternally binding ethical standards of that covenant. In short, they have confused the fruits of Christianity with the roots. They have attempted to chop away the roots yet somehow preserve the fruits.

B. Escapist Religion

This is the second great tradition of anti-Christian religion. Seeing that the exercise of autonomous power is a snare and a delusion, the proponents of escapist religion have sought to insulate themselves from the general culture—a culture maintained by power. They have fled the responsibilities of worldwide dominion, or even regional dominion, in the vain hope that God will release them from the requirements of the general dominion covenant.

The Christian version of the escapist religion is sometimes called "pietism," but its theological roots can be traced back to the ancient heresy of *mysticism*. Rather than proclaiming the requirement of *ethical union* with Jesus Christ, the perfect man, the mystic calls for *metaphysical union* with a monistic, unified god. In the early church, there were many types of mysticism, but the most feared rival religion which continually infiltrated the church was gnosticism. It proclaimed many doctrines, but the essence of gnostic faith was *radical personal individualism*—personal escape from matter—leading to *radical impersonal collectivism*: the abolition of human personality through absorption into the Godhead. It proclaimed retreat from the material realm and escape to a higher, purer, spiritual realm through various "Eastern" techniques of self-manipulation: asceticism, higher consciousness, and initiation into secret mysteries.

Gnosticism survives as a way of thinking and acting (or failing to act) even today, as Rushdoony pointed out. The essence of this faith is its antinomianism. Gnostics despise biblical law. But their hatred of the law of God leads them to accept the laws of the state. Rushdoony put it this way.

> Gnosticism survives today in theosophy, Jewish Kabbalism, occultism, existentialism, masonry, and like faiths. Because Gnosticism made the individual, rather than a dualism of mind and matter, ultimate, it was essentially hostile to morality and law, requiring often that believers live beyond good and evil by denying the validity of all moral law. Gnostic groups which did not openly avow such doctrines affirmed an ethic of love as against law, negating law and morality in terms of the 'higher' law and

> morality of love. Their contempt of law and time manifested itself also by a willingness to comply with the state.... The usual attitude was one of contempt for the material world, which included the state, and an outward compliance and indifference. A philosophy calling for an escape from time is not likely to involve itself in the battles of time.[6]

Their denial of the continuing validity of biblical law has led them to deny the relevance of earthly time. By denying biblical law, they thereby forsake the chief tool of dominion—our means of using time to subdue the earth to the glory of God. The basic idea that undergirds escapist religion is the *denial of the dominion covenant*. The escapist religionists believe that the techniques of self-discipline, whether under God or apart from God (e.g., Buddhism), offer power over only limited areas of life. They attempt to conserve their power by focusing their ethical concern on progressively (regressively) narrower areas of personal responsibility. The "true believer" thinks that he will gain more control over himself and his narrow environment by restricting his self-imposed zones of responsibility. His concern is *self*, from start to finish; his attempt to escape from responsibilities beyond the narrow confines of self is a program for gaining power over self. It is a religion of works, of *self-salvation*. A man first "humbles" himself by admitting that there are limits to his power. He then insists that there are major limits to the range of his responsibilities. He does this in order to elevate himself to a position of hypothetically God-like spirituality: a being unconcerned with dominion or power.

Escapist religion proclaims institutional peace—"peace at any price." Ezekiel responded to such an assertion in the name of God: "...they have seduced my people, saying, "Peace; and there was no peace" (Ezek. 13:10a). Patrick Henry's inflammatory words in March of 1775—"Peace, peace—but there is no peace"[7]—were taken from Ezekiel and also Jeremiah: "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). This rival religion proclaims peace because it has little interest in the systematic efforts that are always required to

6. R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1971] 2007), pp. 136–37.

7. Norine Dickson Campbell, *Patrick Henry: Patriot and Statesman* (Old Greenwich, Connecticut: Devin-Adair, 1969), p. 130. The substance of Henry's famous St. John's Church speech, which mobilized the Virginia Assembly, was reconstructed by a later historian, William Wirt, but is generally considered representative. This was Henry's famous "Give me liberty or give me death" speech, one of the most famous speeches in United States history.

purify institutions as a prelude to social reconstruction.

In short, escapist religion calls for flight from the world, and because man is in this world, it calls for a *flight from humanity*.[8] Its advocates may hide their real concern: the systematic abandonment of a world supposedly so corrupt that nothing can be done to overcome widespread cultural evil. They invoke their moral responsibility of "sharing Christ to the world" or "building up the Church" rather than also rebuilding civilization. Their ultimate concern is *personal flight from responsibility*. This is a revolt against maturity.[9]

C. Dominion Religion

This is the orthodox faith. It proclaims the sovereignty of God, the reliability of the historic creeds, the necessity of standing up for principle, and the requirement that faithful men take risks for God's sake. It proclaims this testimony: "Through the exercise of saving faith, and through ethical conformity to biblical law, regenerate men will increase the extent of their dominion over the earth." It is a religion of conquest—*conquest by grace through ethical action*. The goal is ethical conformity to God, but the results of this conformity involve dominion—over lawful subordinates, over ethical rebels, and over nature. This is the message of Deuteronomy 28:1–14. It is also the message of Jesus Christ, who walked perfectly in God's statutes and in God's Spirit, and who then was granted total power over all creation by the Father (Matt. 28:18).[10] I am not speaking here of Christ's divine nature as the Second Person of the Trinity, who always had total power; I am speaking of His nature as perfect man, who earned total power through ethical conformity to God and through His death and resurrection.

Dominion religion recognizes the relationship between *righteousness* and *authority*, between covenantal faithfulness and covenantal blessings. Those who are faithful in little things are given more. This is the meaning of Christ's parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30).[11]

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8. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Flight from Humanity: A Study of the Effect of Neoplatonism on Christianity* (Vallecito, California: Chalcedon, [1973] 2008).

9. R. J. Rushdoony, *Revolt Against Maturity: A Biblical Psychology of Man* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1971] 1987).

10. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press [2000] 2012), ch. 48; Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

11. North, *ibid*., ch. 47.

The process of dominion is a function of *progressive sanctification*, both personal-individual and also institutional (family, church, business, school, civil government, etc.: Deut. 28:1–14).

D. Moses vs. Pharaoh

Pick up any commentary on the Book of Exodus. Read its account of the first 15 chapters. You will find a lot of discussion of Hebrew vocabulary, Moses' theology, and the sovereignty of God's power. But you will not find a detailed discussion of Egypt. You will not find an analysis of the theology and culture of the society that placed the Hebrews under bondage. You will not find a discussion of the relationship between Egypt's theology and Egypt's economic and political institutions.

These are remarkable omissions. It is not that commentators have no knowledge about Egypt. Rather, it is that they have failed to understand the theological and political issues that were inherent in this confrontation. Sufficient information is available to construct at least an outline of Egyptian society. While Egyptology is a highly specialized and linguistically rigorous field of study, there are numerous scholarly summaries of the religion and social institutions of Egypt. I am no specialist in this field, and I have no immediate access to a large university library of books and manuscripts relating to Egypt, but the World Wide Web, interlibrary loans, and normal intelligence are sufficient to "open the closed book" of at least the bare essentials of Egyptian thought and culture. The bare essentials are sufficient to enable anyone to draw some simple conclusions concerning the differences between the gods of Egypt and the God of the Israelites. Furthermore, it is not that difficult to make other comparisons: socialism vs. market freedom, bureaucracy vs. decentralized decision-making, the omniscient state vs. limited civil government, static society vs. future-oriented society, stagnation vs. growth. Yet the commentators, as far as I have been able to determine, have systematically refused to discuss such issues. *They have been blind to the all-encompassing nature of the confrontation*. To a great extent, this is because they have been blind to the implications of biblical religion for both social theory and institutions.

E. Chronology

There are other topics that need to be discussed. One of the most important is the problem of chronology. You can find Bible commentaries that attempt to deal with this issue, but I have yet to find one which openly faces the overwhelming difficulties posed by the almost universal acceptance of the conventional chronology of Egypt.

What these commentaries never admit is that Egyptians did not believe in chronology. The historical records that modern (and even classical Greek) historians have used to reconstruct Egypt's chronology are woefully deficient. The Egyptians simply did not take seriously their own history. *They did not believe in the importance of linear time*. The records they left behind reflect this lack of concern. A century ago, historian George Rawlinson began his chapter on Egyptian chronology with this statement: "It is a patent fact, and one that is beginning to obtain general recognition, that the chronological element in early Egyptian history is in a state of almost hopeless obscurity."[12] He was incorrect, however, concerning the coming "general recognition" of the problem. Only the most scholarly and detailed monographs on Egypt bother to warn readers about the problem.

There are several kinds of chronological documents, including the actual monuments. "The chronological value of these various sources of information is, however, in every case slight. The great defect of these monuments is their incompleteness. The Egyptians had no era. They drew out no chronological schemes. They cared for nothing but to know how long each incarnate god, human or bovine, had condescended to tarry on the earth. They recorded carefully the length of the life of each Apis bull, and the length of the reign of each king; but they neglected to take note of the intervals between one Apis bull and another, and omitted to distinguish the sole reign of a monarch from his joint reign with others."[13]

Commentary readers are also not informed of this crucial fact: virtually all chronologies of the ancient Near East and pre-classical Greece are constructed on the assumption that the conventional chronology of Egypt is the legitimate standard. Modern scholars believe that *the chronology of Egypt should be imposed on the chronologies of all other civilizations of the ancient Near East*, including the biblical chronology of the Hebrews. Thus, when the Bible says explicitly that the exodus took place 480 years before Solomon began to construct

12. George Rawlinson, *A History of Egypt*, 2 vols. (New York: Alden, 1886), II, p. 1.
13. *Ibid*., II, p. 2.

the temple (I Kings 6:1),[14] historians interpret this information within the framework of the hypothetical Egyptian chronological scheme. When they even admit that the pharaohs of the *supposed* dynastic era of the fifteenth century before Christ were extremely powerful kings —men like Thutmose III—whose mummies still exist,[15] they are tempted to ignore these difficulties, or even to ignore the clear teaching of the Bible. Many of them date the exodus centuries later. They allow a hypothetical chronology of Egypt to dictate their interpretation of Scripture. This is not the way that Christian scholarship is supposed to be conducted.

In the early 1950s, Immanuel Velikovsky, a genius (or fraud, his critics say) began to publish a series of studies that reconstructed (among other things) the chronologies of the ancient world. Velikovsky began his reconstruction with a discussion of an ancient Egyptian document, long overlooked by historians, which contains references to a series of catastrophes that look remarkably similar to those described in early chapters of the Book of Exodus.

Then, in 1971, an amateur historian named Donovan Courville published a book that was based in part on Velikovsky's work, but which went far beyond it. Courville's book has been systematically ignored by Egyptologists and Christian scholars alike. I know of one case where a seminary professor absolutely refused to discuss the book with his students, either publicly or privately, when asked about it. Why the hostility? Because Courville's book, like Velikovsky's books, offers a frontal assault on the reigning presuppositions of historians regarding the reliability of Egyptian records and the reliability of the conclusions based on them. In Courville's case, the affront is worse: he was saying that Christian specialists in the field of ancient history have accepted the testimony of humanist (Darwinian) scholars and humanist (Egyptian) records in preference to the clear testimony of the Bible. Conservative scholars resent the implication that they have compromised their scholarship in order to seek recognition from (or avoid confrontation with) the conventional, dominant humanist academic community. Thus, I have seen no commentary on the Book of Exodus which refers to (let alone promotes) either Velikovsky or Courville, nor do the standard Christian encyclopedias.

14. Gary North, *Disobedience and Defeat: An Economic Commentary on the Historical Books* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 17.

15. Photographs of the mummies of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II appear in Donovan Courville, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, 2 vols. (Loma Linda, California: Challenge Books, 1971), I, p. 37.

This commentary is the exception. For this reason, it represents a break with prevailing scholarship concerning the circumstances of the exodus. It may be incorrect, but it is incorrect in new ways—ways that do not begin with the presupposition that conventional humanist historical scholarship is binding, or the presupposition that the biblical account of history is inferior to the Egyptian record. My position is clear: it is better to make mistakes within an intellectual framework that is governed by the presupposition of the Bible's infallibility than it is to make mistakes that are governed by the presupposition that Darwinian scholarship is the eternal standard of truth.

F. Confrontation

The first 15 chapters of the Book of Exodus deal with the confrontation between God and Egypt. This confrontation was comprehensive. It involved a dispute between two radically different worldviews. It involved a war between the God of the Hebrews and a false god called Pharaoh. Every aspect of civilization was at stake. It was not "merely" a war over theology as such. It was a war over *theology as life*. This commentary brings into the open several areas of confrontation that previously have not been discussed. These subordinate areas of confrontation were inescapably linked to the main confrontation between God and Pharaoh. Amazingly, the terms of even this primary confrontation are seldom discussed.

Essentially the same confrontation has continued from the beginning, meaning from the garden of Eden. It has manifested itself in many ways, but the essential question never changes: *Who is God*? Secondarily, *what is the relationship between God and His creation*? The answers given by the rulers of Egypt were essentially the same answer proposed to man by Satan by way of the serpent: "ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3:5). Because the modern world has come to a similar theological conclusion—that, in the absence of any other god, man must be the only reliable candidate—the modern world has come to similar social and economic conclusions.

The rise of totalitarian bureaucracies in the twentieth century can and should be discussed in relation to the rise of a humanistic variation of Egyptian theology. It is not that humanists have adopted Egypt's polytheism (though modern relativism sounds suspiciously like polytheism), but rather that they have, as Darwinians (or worse), adopted *Egypt's theology of the continuity of being*, with the state, as the most powerful representative of "collective mankind," serving as the

primary agency of social organization. The remaining chapters in the Book of Exodus describe the continuation of this same confrontation with Egypt. In this case, however, the departing slaves of the now-smashed Egyptian civilization replaced their former rulers as the defenders of the old order. God dealt with them in very similar ways, though with greater mercy, as a result of Moses' prayer on behalf of the integrity of God's name and God's promises (Ex. 32:9–14; Num. 14:13–16).

Therefore, it should not surprise us that there are still many Christian defenders of that same old statist order in our current wilderness wanderings, especially in the barren wastes of the college and seminary classroom. These people are slaves who have not yet recognized the freedom that God has offered to His people through His Bible-revealed law-order. When covenant-keeping people sit too long as household slaves beneath the table of the Satanists, hoping for a few crumbs (or academic degrees) to fall from their table, they find it difficult to imagine that *it is the enemies of God who are supposed to sit beneath the table of the righteous*, begging for scraps until the day of judgment provides them with no further opportunities for repentance. Let us not forget that it was a Canaanite woman, not a ruler of Israel, who first articulated this principle of biblical government.

> And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour (Matt. 15:22–28).[16]

Israel's leaders were sitting at the table of the Romans, begging. Christian leaders sit at the table of the humanists, begging.[17] Some things have not changed.

16. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 34.

17. The most egregious form of this institutional begging in my day is the request by Christian seminaries to be accredited by the God-hating humanist liberal theologians who control the seminary accreditation system.

Conclusion

Three and a half millennia ago, Moses was commanded by God to confront the Pharaoh. The result was the exodus, the archetype historical event in the life of Israel, the event to which the prophets appealed again and again in their confrontations with the rebellious Hebrews of their day. This same confrontation goes on in every era, and the contemporary Christian critic must be equally willing to confront the pharaohs of his day with the same theological distinctions: sovereign God or sovereign man, God's revelation or man's revelation, biblical society or the bureaucratic State, God's law or chaos. "Choose this day whom ye will serve." Serve God or perish.

1

POPULATION GROWTH: TOOL OF DOMINION

> *And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already. And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.*
>
> EXODUS 1:5–7

The theocentric principle here is *dominion through biological multiplication*. This passage is an extension of the dominion covenant. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28).[1]

The words relating to growth are repeated in verse 7: fruitful, increased (teemed), multiplied, waxed (numerous), with exceeding strength, strongly, and filled—a seven-fold representation.[2] Bible-believing commentators have seldom focused much attention on these verses, possibly because they are so difficult to explain by means of their usual assumption, namely, that only 70 people originally descended into Egypt. How could it be that 70 people and their spouses multiplied to 600,000 men, plus women and children, by the time of the exodus (Ex. 12:37)? A probable explanation is this one: the 70 were not the only source of the original population base. Presumably, they brought with them many household servants who had been cir-

1. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 4.

2. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, [1951] 1974), p. 9. He said that the "seven expressions for increase are used in this verse, a number indicative of perfection. . . ."

cumcised and who were therefore counted as part of the covenant population. We do not know for certain how many of these circumcised household servants came, but it may have been in the thousands.

We should also bear in mind that "70" is a significant number in Scripture, in terms of age, chronology, and also in terms of numbering people. In Genesis 10, 70 peoples of mankind are listed, 14 from Japheth, 30 from Ham, and 26 from Shem.[3] At the feast of tabernacles in the seventh month, beginning on the fifteenth day, the priests were to begin a week of sacrifices. For seven days, a descending number of bullocks were to be sacrificed: 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, and 7, for a total of 70 bullocks. Then, on the eighth day (the beginning of the next week), one final bullock was to be sacrificed (Num. 29:12–36). Presumably, these were sacrifices for all the nations of the world, plus Israel. There were 70 elders in Israel at the time of God's confirmation of the covenant at Sinai (Ex. 24:1). God at one point took His Spirit from Moses and gave it to the 70 elders (Num. 11:16). Also, when the Israelites defeated Adoni-Bezek after the death of Joshua, he confessed that he had slain 70 kings (Judges 1:7), presumably a number referring symbolically to the whole world. Seventy men were sent out by Jesus to evangelize southern Israel (Luke 10:1, 17).[4] In Christ's day, there were 70 members of the Sanhedrin, plus the President.[5] So the number "70" meant for the Hebrews something like "a whole population," although this does not deny the validity of 70 as the number of lineal heirs who came down into Egypt.

The growth of the Hebrew population has to be considered a remarkable expansion. How long did it take? This question has also baffled Bible-believing commentators. When did the exodus occur? When did Jacob's family enter Egypt? Were the Israelites in Egypt a full 430 years? Donovan Courville, the Seventh Day Adventist scholar, called this chronology question "the exodus problem."[6]

3. Frederick Louis Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, [1887]), II, p. 17. Godet discussed the problem of 70 vs. 72, which occurs in this estimation, and also in the differing New Testament references to the 70 or 72 sent out by Jesus (Luke 10:1).

4. Some manuscripts read 72. Godet argued that 70 is the correct reading: *idem*.

5. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, [1886]), II, p. 554. Cf. "Sanhedrim," in McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1894), IX, p. 342.

6. Donovan A. Courville, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, 2 vols. (Loma Linda, California: Challenge Books, 1971). Courville's original insight concerning the need for a reconstruction of Egypt's chronology came from Immanuel Velikovsky's study, *Ages in Chaos* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1952), which presents the

A. The Problem of Chronology

Exodus 12:40 reads as follows in the King James Version: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." *Fact number one:* a sojourn of 430 years. The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament dating from the second century B.C.) both say "Egypt and Canaan,"[7] rather than just "Egypt," which indicates the likely solution to the exodus problem.

We can see the nature of the problem in Stephen's testimony, just prior to his martyrdom. It includes this statement: "And God spoke on this wise [in this way], That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years" (Acts 7:6). *Fact number two:* bondage of 400 years. This was also the period promised by God to Abraham: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance" (Gen. 15:13–14). *Fact number three:* deliverance in the fourth generation. "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16).[8] Did God mean the fourth generation of captives? If the period of bondage was 430 years, how could only four generations have filled up the entire period assigned to them?

Paul provided additional crucial information: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. . . . And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect" (Gal. 3:16a, 17). *Fact number four:* it was 430 years from the covenant to the exodus. This further compli-

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case against the traditional chronologies of the ancient world. Velikovsky identified the Hyksos rulers ("shepherd kings") of Egypt as the invading Amelekites. He argued that modern scholars have inserted a 500–700 year period into all the histories of the ancient world (since all are based on Egypt's supposed chronology), a period which must be eliminated. Velikovsky wrote that "we still do not know which of the two histories, Egyptian or Israelite, must be readjusted" (p. 338). Courville's book shows that it is modern scholarship's version of Egypt's chronology which is defective, not the chronology of the Old Testament. See Appendix A: "The Reconstruction of Egypt's Chronology."

7. Note in the *New International Version* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1978), p. 83.

8. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 23.

cates the problem: the entire period, from Abraham to the exodus, was 430 years—a period which encompassed Isaac's life, Jacob's, Joseph in Egypt, the arrival of the brothers and their families, the years of prosperity and population growth in the land of Goshen in Egypt, Moses' birth, his departure at age 40, his 40 years in the wilderness, and the exodus itself. Paul's language is unambiguous. What, then, are we to make of the other three accounts?

1. The Patriarchal Era: 215 Years

The best place to begin to unravel this problem is with the chronology of Abraham's family. We are told that he was called out of Haran when he was 75 years old (Gen. 12:4). Isaac was born 25 years later, when Abraham was a hundred (Gen. 21:5). Jacob and Esau were born 60 years later, when Isaac was 60 years old (Gen. 25:26). Finally, Jacob died at age 130 in Egypt (Gen. 47:9). Therefore, from Abraham's entrance into a foreign land until the Israelites' descent into Egypt, about 215 years elapsed (25 + 60 + 130). If we assume that the establishment of the covenant took place in the first year or so of Abraham's sojourn in Canaan, with 25 years in between the covenant (Gen. 15) and the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21), then we can begin to make sense of the data. God said that Abraham's heirs would be *in bondage for 400 years*, while Paul said it was *430 years from the Abrahamic covenant to the giving of the law*. If we subtract 25 from 430—from the covenant to the birth of Isaac, the promised son of the covenant line—we get 405 years. This is very close to the 400 years of the "affliction" promised in Genesis 15:13–14 and mentioned by Stephen in Acts 7:6. We are now arguing about only five years, from the birth of Isaac to the period in which the captivity "in" Egypt—*under Egypt's domination*—began. Genesis 21 says that it was only after Isaac was weaned that Ishmael mocked him—"laughing" in the Hebrew (vv. 8–9). This can be understood as the beginning of the period of Egyptian persecution, for Ishmael was half Egyptian.[9] It was the time of Isaac's youth, perhaps about age five. Abraham then expelled the Egyptian woman and her son, who travelled into the wilderness (21:14). Thus, it was not the bondage period in geographical Egypt that God had in mind, but the *entire period of pilgrimage*, during which they were afflicted by strangers.

9. I am indebted to James Jordan for this insight. If it is incorrect, then we would have to adopt Courville's approach, namely, to argue that it seems legitimate to understand the 400 years of Genesis 15:13 as a rounding off of 405.

2. Residence in Egypt: 215 Years

The culmination of this period of rootlessness, or life in foreign lands, was the final era of outright bondage in Egypt (Gen. 15:14). Courville's comments are appropriate, that

> the period of affliction began back in the time of Abraham and not with the descent. Actually, the affliction in Egypt did not begin with the descent but only with the rise of the king "who knew not Joseph." That the "sojourn" also began back in the time of Abraham is clear from the statement in Hebrews 11:9, which reads:
>
> > By faith he [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.
>
> Others of the ancients than Paul thus understood the 430-year sojourn. The translators of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek have added a phrase to make clear the meaning of Exodus 12:40 as they understood it. The Septuagint reading of the verse is:
>
> > The sojourning of the children and of their fathers, which they so journeyed in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt. . . .
>
> Josephus, as a Hebrew scholar of antiquity, thus understood the verse:
>
> > They left Egypt in the month Xanthicus, on the fifteenth day of the lunar month; four hundred and thirty years after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but two hundred and fifteen years only after Jacob removed into Egypt.[10]

This citation from Courville's book indicates that it was long ago understood that the 430 years of Exodus 12:40 must be interpreted in terms of *the entire pilgrimage experience, Abraham to Moses*. The reference to "the children of Israel" must be understood as Hebrews in general, not simply to those born of Jacob. It includes Abraham and Isaac. This means that Palestine was an Egyptian vassal region throughout the Patriarchal era of Exodus 12:40. It also helps to explain why Abraham journeyed to Egypt during the famine (Gen. 12:10). Egypt was the capital.

Consider Courville's chart of his proposed reconstructed chronology of Egypt and Israel.[11] Understand that Courville's book remains almost unknown in Christian circles, and even less known in aca-

10. *Ibid.*, I, p. 140. For Josephus' statement, see *Antiquities of the Jews*, II:XV:2, in *Josephus: Complete Works*, William Whiston, translator (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel, 1960), p. 62.

11. Taken from *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, II (Summer 1975), p. 145.

demic circles. His reconstructed chronology is not taken seriously by archaeologists and historians, any more than Velikovsky's chronology in Ages in Chaos was (or is) taken seriously.

Correlation of Scriptural Incidents with Egyptian History by the Traditional and Reconstructed Chronologies

Incident or Era	Traditional Background or Date	Reconstruction Background orDate
Noachian Flood	Not recognized as factual. The proper background for the immedate post-diluvian period is the Mesolithic period, dated c. 10,000 B.C. or earlier.	The Mesolithic background for the immedate post-diluvian period is accepted. Date c. 2300 B.C.
Dispersion from Babel	If recognized at all, the incident is set far back in the pre-dynastic.	Dated 27 years before the unification of Egypt under Mena. Date, c. 2125 B.C.
Abraham enters Canaan	Commonly set in early Dynasty XII dated c. 1900 B.C. Earlier dates are entertained.	Dated very soon after the beginning of Dynasty IV; 1875 B.C.
Famine of Joseph	No famine inscription datable to the era of Joseph as placed in the Hyksos period.	Equated with the famine inscrip-tion in the reign of Sesotris I of twelfth dynasty. Dated 1662 B.C.
Enslavement of Israel	Eighteenth dynasty theory of Exodus must recognize an early king of this dynasty as the pharaoh initiating the enslavement. This would be Amenhotep I or Thutmose I.	Enslavement initiated by Sesostris III of Dynasty XII. Date, c. 1560 B.C.
The Exodus	Eighteenth dynasty theory must recognize the position either at the end of the reign of Thutmose III or early in the reign of Amenhotep II. Date c. 1445 B.C.	The reconstruction places the Exodus at the end of the five year reign of Koneharis, second primary ruler of Dynasty XIII, but 26th in the Turin list. Date is 1446–1445 B.C.

Incident or Era	Traditional Background or Date	Reconstruction Background orDate
Period of the Judges	Encompasses the period of Dynasty XVIII from Amenhotep III, all of XIX as currently composed, and the first half of XX. Dates: 1375–1050 B.C.	Falls in the Hyksos period, c. 1375–1050 B.C.
United Monarchy of Israel	Background is in Dynasties XX and XXI. Dates, 1050–930 B.C.	Background is in early Dynasty XVIII ending near the beginning of the sole reign of Thutmose III. Dates, 1050–930 B.C.
Sacking of Solomon's Temple	Shishak identified as Sheshonk I of Dynasty XXII. Date is 926 B.C. in fifth year of Rehoboam.	Shishak identified as Thutmose III of Dynasty XVIII. Date 926 B.C.
Fall of Israel to Assyria	Must be placed in the background of Dynasty XXIII to retain the established date 722–721 B.C.	Falls in the fifth year of Merneptah dated 721 B.C. Synchronism indicated by inscription of this year telling of catastrophe toIsrael.
Fall of Judah to Babylon	In Dynasty XXVI. Date c. 606 B.C.	In Dynasty XXV, Date c. 606 B.C.

Courville produced a creative reconstruction of Egypt's chronology in terms of the 215–215 division. He pinpointed the famine as having begun 217 years before the exodus.[12] Using this estimate in conjunction with my dating calculations, with I Kings 6:1 as a date marker,[13] this was 1710 B.C. He provided evidence from Egyptian inscriptions of a famine in this era, and he even identified the Pharaoh of this era, Sesostris I. He thought that references to a vizer of Sesostris I, Mentuhotep, refer to Joseph.[14] The fact that a tombstone exists

12. Courville, *Exodus Problem*, I, p. 151.

13. Gary North, *Disobedience and Defeat: An Economic Commentary on the Historical Books* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 17.

14. *Ibid*., I, p. 141. George Rawlinson wrote of Mentuhotep: "This official, whose tombstone is among the treasures of the museum of Boulaq, appears to have held a rank in the kingdom second only to that of the king. He filled at one and the same time the offices of minister of justice, home secretary, chief commissioner of public works, director of public worship, and perhaps of foreign secretary and minister of war. [He cites Brugsch's *History of Egypt*.] 'When he arrived at the gate of the royal residence, all the other great personages who might be present bowed down before him, and did

does not necessarily mean that the bones of "Mentuhotep" were still under it when it was discovered. Joseph's bones were removed from Egypt and taken to Israel (Ex. 13:19). It is possible that the Hebrews decided to leave the tombstone behind as a reminder to their former taskmasters, and that the Egyptians, in the confusion of the Amalekite invasion, subsequently neglected to dispose of it. Later Egyptians may not have remembered who this official really was. The possibility exists, of course, that Courville was incorrect concerning the Joseph-Mentuhotep identity.

His thesis is simple, though complex in its demonstration: the three conventional lists of kings—Manetho's list, the Turin list, and the Sothis list—are in error when they assume that each king's reign followed another. Courville demonstrated that many of these "kings" were not kings at all, but lower officials whose rule overlapped the reign of the true pharaohs. In short, the conventional histories of Egypt have overestimated the age of Egypt's kingdoms because they have relied on a false assumption, namely, that the kings on the various lists did not frequently have overlapping reigns. Thus, among other problems, Courville's reconstructed chronology solves the problem of the conventional dating of the origins of Egypt thousands of years prior to a Bible-based estimate of the date of the Noachian flood. In short, Courville's book indicates that Christian scholars are still in bondage to Egypt. He offered them a methodological exodus. But, like the slaves of Moses' day, they cry out against the proposed deliverance. They prefer to remain in bondage. The leeks and onions of Egypt—Ph.D. degrees, tenured teaching positions, and intellectual respectability among their heathen masters—still entice them.

B. Jacob's Heirs

Unquestionably, the growth of the Hebrew population was rapid. If the sons of Jacob, which included each family's circumcised bondservants, came down to Egypt 215 years before Moses led their heirs out of Egypt, then the Hebrews experienced long-term population growth unequaled in the records of man. Remember, however, that people lived longer in Joseph's era. Kohath, Moses' grandfather, lived for 133 years (Ex. 6:18). Levi, Kohath's father, died at age 137 (Ex. 6:16). Moses' brother Aaron died at age 123 (Num. 33:39). Moses died at age 120 (Deut. 34:7). Nevertheless, Moses acknowledged that

obeisance.' He was judge, financier, general, administrator, artist." George Rawlinson, *History of Ancient Egypt* (New York: John B. Alden, 1886), II, p. 83.

in his day, normal life spans were down to about 70 years: "The days of our years are threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Ps. 90:10). (Again, the number "70" appears, in this case to describe a whole lifetime, rather than a whole population.) Caleb boasted about his strength for a man of 85 (Josh. 14:10–11), indicating that in his generation life spans had shrunk.

These years of long life were reduced after the exodus. Men seldom survived beyond 120. One exception was Jehoiada, the high priest, who lived to 130 (II Chron. 24:15). The supreme exception was Job, who lived 140 years after his confrontation with God (Job 42:16), making him the oldest man after Abraham. If, during the years in Egypt, they begat children from an early age and continued to bear them until well into their eighties and nineties, as Jacob had done before them, then we can understand how such a tremendous expansion of numbers was possible. As I explain below, foreigners in large numbers covenanted themselves to Hebrew families. It is also possible that Hebrew men married Egyptian wives in the first century of prosperity, as Joseph had done (Gen. 41:45). This would have greatly expanded the number of children born into Hebrew families, since the Hebrew husbands would not have been limited exclusively to Hebrew women. A family of five boys and five girls could have become a family of 100 Hebrew grandchildren within the grandparents' lifetimes. Of course, not every family could have seen this happen, since some Hebrew men would have had to marry Hebrew wives (along with Egyptian wives) in order for the daughters of all the families to have remained inside the covenant lines. On the other hand, Egyptian men may have converted to the faith, especially during the period of Israel's preeminence in Egypt (e.g., Lev. 24:10). Even apart from the assumption of multiple wives (some Egyptian), it is obvious that long lives, high birth rates, and low death rates could have produced a huge population within two centuries.

1. Household Servants

We should also understand that the 70 direct heirs of Jacob described in Exodus 1:5 were lineal heirs, "out of the loins of Jacob." But the total number of households under each lineal heir would have been far larger. Servants who were circumcised were part of the families, and they would have come down into Egypt with the direct lineal heirs. These servants would have participated in the blessings

of Goshen, which was the best land in Egypt (Gen. 47:6). The Pharaoh of the famine gave his best land to Joseph's relatives, but this included their entire households. The size of the land indicates this: the land needed administration. Pharaoh even wanted to place his own cattle under the administration of "men of activity" among the households (Gen. 47:6b). He expected them to care for the best land of Egypt (Goshen), but this would have required more than 70 men and their immediate families.

Therefore, when the households of Israel went into bondage under a later Pharaoh, the descendants of the servants were counted as the covenantal heirs of Jacob.[15] They also went into bondage. When the exodus from Egypt freed the Israelites, all those who had been part of the families of Jacob went free. The multitude that swarmed out of Egypt included the heirs of the circumcised servants of the 70 lineal heirs of Jacob.

How many people actually came down into Egypt during the famine? It could have been as many as 10,000. One estimate of Abraham's household is 3,000, given his 318 fighting men (Gen. 14:14).[16] We are not told how many servants were still under the administration of Jacob. It is likely that most of Isaac's servant families went with Esau rather than Jacob. But Jacob had recruited servants during his stay with Laban (Gen. 32:16), although we do not know how many. We do know that Pharaoh wanted his best land to be taken care of by Jacob's family, and he would have recognized the covenantal relationship between the lineal heirs and their servants. The servants would have been responsible administrators because they were under the authority of Jacob's heirs. Any relationship between the God of Jacob and his lineal heirs would have included the household servants. Pharaoh, as a king, would have understood this covenantal principle, especially since the theology of Egypt asserted the divinity of the Pharaoh. All Egyptians were his servants; any relationship between him and the gods of Egypt was therefore also a relationship between the gods and the Egyptian people.[17] It seems safe to conclude that the 70

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15. See Numbers 1:4–18 and 7:2–11 for an indication that the princes of each tribe were the physical descendants of the twelve patriarchs.

16. Folker Willesen, "The Yalid in Hebrew Society," *Studia Theologica*, XII (1958), p. 198.

17. This covenantal relationship proved to be the undoing of the Egyptian people at the time of the exodus. Their Pharaoh's rebellion against God brought them low, just as the obedience to God by the Pharaoh of Joseph's day brought them the external blessing of survival.

households included non-lineal heirs.

C. Exponential Growth

We need to understand the remarkable aspects of compound growth. If as few as 3,000 came into Egypt in Joseph's day, then the rate of population growth over the next 215 years was 3.18% per annum in order to reach 2.5 million by the time of the exodus. Had this rate of increase been maintained after their settlement of Canaan, there would have been over two billion of them 215 years later, not counting the "mixed multitude" (Ex. 12:38) that went with them out of Egypt. Two hundred and seventy five years after the settlement of Canaan, there would have been 13.8 billion, roughly equivalent to three times the world's population in 1980. In short, they would have spread across the face of the earth.

If there were more than 3,000 people in the families of the Israelites who came down to Egypt in Joseph's day, then the rate of growth was under 3% per annum over the 215-year period in Egypt. A lower rate of growth would have lengthened the time necessary to reach 13.8 billion people, but the speed of increase would still have been startling. If there were 10,000 who entered Egypt in Joseph's day, then to reach 2.5 million people 215 years later, the annual rate of increase would have been 2.6%. Had this "low" rate been maintained after their entry into Canaan (assuming no population growth during the 40 years in the wilderness and in five years of fighting to conquer Canaan), the Hebrews would have multiplied to 620 million people 215 years after settling the land, 2.9 billion in 275 years, 5.5 billion in 300 years, 10 billion in 325 years, and 13.8 billion in 335 years. But God told them that there would be no miscarriages or diseases if they obeyed His law (Ex. 20:10; 25:25–26), implying a more rapid rate of population growth than they had experienced in Egypt.

We get some idea of just what kind of growth was implied by a 2.6% annual increase when we consider that Solomon began building the temple 480 years after the exodus (I Kings 6:1). Subtracting the 40 years in the wilderness and five years spent in conquering that part of Canaan which was on the far side of the Jordan River (Josh. 14:10),[18] we get 435 years after the settlement of Canaan. If

18. Actually, part of Canaan began to be conquered 38 years after the exodus (Deut. 2:14). The first generation of Hebrews had all died by this time (Deut. 2:15–16). Seven years later, all of Canaan was under Israel's control, except for those pockets of resistance that never were conquered (Jud. 1:27–2:4).

2.5 million Hebrews began to reproduce when the land was settled, and the rate of increase was 2.6% per annum, 435 years later there would have been 176 billion Hebrews. The land of Israel was about 7 million acres. The population density by Solomon's time would have been 15,143 Hebrews per acre. An acre is a square about 210 feet per side, or 44,000 square feet. Obviously, either the rate of population increase would have fallen well before Solomon's day, or else they would have spread across the face of the earth. Even with a nation of high-rise apartment houses, 176 billion Hebrews would not have squeezed into the land of Israel. More than this: a population of 176 billion Hebrews implies that the earth would have been filled well before Solomon's day. It therefore implies that the requirement of the dominion covenant relating to multiplying and filling the earth would long since have been fulfilled.

These numbers should lead us to question the whole scenario of compound growth of over 2.5% per annum for many centuries on end. Nothing like this has ever taken place in man's history. Only since the Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth century has anything like it taken place in recorded history. We need to examine some of the statistical relationships before we can make valid conclusions concerning what happened in this 215-year period.

D. The 2.5 Million Hebrews

The standard estimation of how many people left Egypt at the exodus is 2–2.5 million Hebrews, not counting the "mixed multitudes." Why is this figure reasonable? The best answer relates to the number of Hebrews a generation later, after the deaths of all of the members of the adult Hebrews who fled, with only two exceptions: Joshua and Caleb.

The generation in the wilderness entered Canaan with approximately the same number of men who had left Egypt 40 years earlier. There were 600,000 men who left Egypt (Ex. 12:37), and one year later (Num. 1:1), there were 603,550 fighting men (Num. 1:46), plus 22,273 Levites (Num. 3:43). The number of adult males was only slowly increasing. When the second census was taken before they entered the land, 40 years later, the population of the tribes had decreased slightly, to 601,730 (Num 26:51), plus 23,000 Levites (Num. 26:62).

This points to population stagnation. More important, it points to at least two generations of stable reproduction: one male child and one female child per family. Why do I say this? Because populations that are growing experience the after-effects of prior high birth rates,

even in later periods when the birth rate in the society falls below the bare minimum reproduction rate of 2.1 children per woman. This is what most Western industrial nations are facing today: birth rates below the reproduction rate. Nevertheless, the populations are still growing. The reason is that in previous periods, there were higher birth rates, and women who were born up to 45 years earlier are still in the child-bearing ages. As these women marry and begin to have children, the upward curve of population continues to rise, although it is slowing down. Women may be having fewer children than their mothers did, but there are lots of women still within or entering the child-bearing ages. It takes decades of below reproduction-rate births to begin to bring down the aggregate number of people in a society, as middle-aged women cease having children, and the very old members of society continue to die off.

What is abnormal at any time in history is for a population to remain stable for a full generation. A steady-state population is far more common on islands or in very small nations, where emigration is possible or where abortion or even infanticide is practiced as a means of population control. In the ancient world, steady-state populations were common because of high death rates for children, but this had not been the experience of the Hebrews during the years of rapid growth. Their population growth rate had been sufficiently high so that the Pharaoh of the oppression issued his edict concerning infanticide.

Sometime in between this edict and the exodus, the Hebrew population became a steady-state population. Thus, the fathers of the exodus generation were succeeded by almost exactly the same number of sons. This points to the fact that their fathers had also reproduced at close to a steady-state level, since there was no "bulge" of women entering the child-bearing years—women who had been produced 20 years earlier by a higher fertility culture. Just about the same number of males arrived in the wilderness years, just barely replacing their dying fathers. This points to a figure of 2.5 million at the exodus: 600,000 men, about 600,000 women, and 1.3 million children. The average Hebrew family was therefore the replacement rate family of about 2.1 children per family. (It is assumed that about 5% of the children—one in 21—will not marry or at least will not bear children: ill health, mental or physical defects, infertility, or just an unwillingness or inability to marry.)

The stable population of the wilderness experience points to a to-

tal population of 2.5 million at the time of the exodus. Only with high death rates in the wilderness could we imagine that significantly more than 2.5 million Hebrews departed. With the exception of the judgments against adult rebels, totalling about 40,000 (Num. 16:35, 49; 25:9), there are no records of high death rates for Israel during the wilderness years. We can safely conclude that the steady-state reproduction rate of the wilderness generation points back to approximately 2.5 million Hebrews involved in the exodus.

If the exodus generation averaged two children per family, this reveals a "mature" or zero-growth population in the generation prior to the exodus. But since there were only four generations from the descent into Egypt and the conquest of Canaan (Gen. 15:16), and the generation of the exodus was already into the steady-state growth phase, the growth to 2.5 million had to take place in the first two generations. There is simply no way that this could have been accomplished by biological reproduction alone.

If we examine the age distribution of a growing population, age group by age group, we find that the numbers get larger as the age group gets lower. Those under age 15 constitute the largest single segment of the population. While it was biologically possible for 3,000 Hebrews and their circumcised servants to have reached 2.5 million in 215 years (3.18% increase per annum), the departing Hebrews would have had very large families. There could not have been 600,000 adult males. There would have been fewer men and far more children in the total population of 2.5 million.

We now must make sense of the data. It is not conceivable, biologically or mentally, that the 3,000 or 10,000 people who came at the descent had multiplied to 600,000 adult males at the exodus. Then where did the 2.5 million Hebrews come from? There is only one possible explanation: from conversions. The number of circumcised servants must have grown rapidly until the era of the oppression, at least 80 years before the exodus. Thus, for about 135 years (215–80), the Hebrews and their circumcised servants experienced high birth and survival rates. The Pharaoh feared their fertility. But their fertility was not sufficient to explain the 600,000 males who departed at the exodus. There must also have been foreigners who covenanted with the favored Hebrews who lived in the choice land of Goshen. They became Hebrews by circumcision.

We can now better understand Moses' words to the Hebrews: "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because

ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of people" (Deut. 7:7). Their growth was due primarily to conversions to the faith. The external blessings of God enabled them to multiply, but especially to multiply by conversion. The majority of those who conquered Canaan were not the biological descendants of Abraham, but they were the covenantal descendants

This has enormous implications for Judaism. The religious issue of "who is a Jew?" is not primarily the question of physical birth; the issue is the covenant. When Jesus warned the Pharisees that God could raise up descendants of Abraham from the stones (Matt. 3:9), He was speaking of vast conversions of gentiles. This was about to happen through the ministry of the church. The true heirs of Israel, Paul wrote, are the spiritual heirs of Abraham, the heirs of the promise of Abraham (Rom. 9:7–8). But what must be recognized is that this had been true in the sojourn in Egypt. It was the promise, as transferred through the covenant, which was the essential mark of the Hebrew. The mark in the flesh only testified to this more important mark, which was spiritual and covenantal. Their numbers had not come from biological generation alone, but from the dominion process of conversion and circumcision. It was not biology which was fundamental, but faith.

E. The Uniqueness of Hebrew Fertility

We can begin to perceive the magnitude of the judgment against Egypt, which was probably also a steady-state population. Zero population growth was an aspect of their static religion and static social theory. In the ancient world, populations did not grow rapidly as they do in the modern world. Thus, the deaths of all the firstborn males in a steady-state population was tantamount to the destruction of that population. Children normally died in their youth. It might take the birth of ten or more children to maintain a two-child legacy. Adam Smith, as late as 1776, remarked that it was common knowledge that poverty-stricken Highland Scot women would bear 20 children in their lifetimes, yet only two or fewer would actually grow to adulthood.[19] After the death of the firstborn Egyptian males, there was no assurance that there would be replacement male children who would reach adulthood and marry.

We know that the Egyptians were facing something uniquely

19. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Ch. VIII, p. 79 (Modern Library).

threatening in the population growth of the Hebrews. It is understandable why the Egyptians had been terrified of the Hebrews. With such a growing population in servitude, it would not be long before their sheer numbers would have overpowered the Egyptian guards. Furthermore, chattel slaves are notoriously unproductive, and the Egyptians had to feed them. The vast bureaucratic projects that the pharaohs were building by means of chattel slave labor were by nature unproductive and resource-absorbing. How much longer beyond Moses' era would they have been able to feed and control the Hebrews? The Pharaoh's policy decision was the oppression.

The oppression shocked the Hebrews. The drowning of the male infants must have had cataclysmic psychological effects on all the Hebrews, and we can easily understand why few if any converts subsequently presented themselves for circumcision. This explains why, in their final 80 years in Egypt, the Hebrews (which meant all circumcised males and their families) experienced a steady-state population rate, that is, zero population growth. The dead males, coupled with the oppression's negative psychological effects, brought population stagnation overnight to the Hebrews.

F. Limits to Growth

A growing population is a tool of dominion, as are all the blessings of God. The humanists' hostility to population growth, beginning in the final third of the twentieth century, was part of a growing suspicion of all forms of economic growth. Growth points to an eventual using up of finite resources, including living space. This, in turn, points either to the end of growth or the end of time. The thought of an end of time within a few centuries is not acceptable to humanists. Therefore, they have instead attacked the concept of linear growth, since growth—especially population growth—cannot be linear indefinitely in a finite universe.[20] (See Appendix B: "The Demographics of Decline.")

Until these attitudes are seen by large numbers of Christians for what they are—*aspects of paganism*—Christians will continue to labor under a modern version of Egyptian slavery. This slavery is both re-

20. This hostility to population growth compromised even Wilhelm Röpke's economic analysis. His fear of "mass society" overwhelmed his otherwise good sense. He never understood that it is not sheer numbers of people that create "mass society," but rather the rebellious ethical and religious assumptions of the population that create "mass society." Röpke's anti-population growth theme appears in several of his books, but especially in *International Order and Economic Integration* (Dortrecht, Holland: Reidel, 1959), Pt. II, ch. IV.

ligious and intellectual. It cannot be limited to the spirit and the intellect, however; ideas do have social consequences. *Christians cannot legitimately expect to conquer the world for Jesus Christ in terms of the ideology of zero-growth humanism*. Such a philosophy should be handed over to the humanists as their very own "tool of subservience," the opposite of dominion. Even better would be population decline for the God-haters. They would simply fade away as an influence on earth. This is the long-term implication of a birth rate below 2.1 children per woman. It is a birth rate below 2.1 children per woman which alone is fully consistent with the Bible's description of the God-hating ethical rebels: "all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8:36b). It is this suicidal birth rate which presently prevails in most Western industrial nations. This is the population program which Pharaoh hoped to impose on his enemies, the Hebrews. He was not sufficiently stupid, or so utterly perverse, to have sought to impose it on his own people.

Pharaoh saw the necessity of protecting his nation's resources from the prolific Israelites. Three and a half millennia later, fearful and defensive socialists have similar concerns. Bertrand Russell, the British socialist philosopher and mathematician, saw clearly the dilemma of socialism: to produce rising per capita wealth, low-productivity socialism requires zero population growth. Socialism also still requires the imposition of harsh penalties against rival populations that continue to grow, just as it did in ancient Egypt. He wrote in 1923:

> Socialism, especially international socialism, is only possible as a stable system if the population is stationary or nearly so. A slow increase might be coped with by improvements in agricultural methods, but a rapid increase must in the end reduce the whole population to penury, and would be almost certain to cause wars. In view of the fact that the population of France has become stationary, and the birth rate has declined enormously among other white nations, it may be hoped that the white population of the world will soon cease to increase. The Asiatic races will be longer, and the negroes still longer, before their birth-rate falls sufficiently to make their numbers stable without the help of war and pestilence. But it is to be hoped that the religious prejudices which have hitherto hampered the spread of birth control will die out, and that within (say) two hundred years the whole world will learn not to be unduly prolific. Until that happens, the benefits aimed at by socialism can only be partially realized, and the less prolific races will have to defend themselves against the more prolific by methods which are disgusting even if they are necessary. In the meantime, therefore, our socialistic aspirations have to be confined to the white races, perhaps with

the inclusion of the Japanese and Chinese at no distant date.[21]

The more progressive modern socialist ideology appears, the more satanically backward it becomes. The spirit of Pharaoh still lives. The anti-dominion defensive spirit of modern socialism has its roots deep in the past, as well as deep in hell.

Conclusion

The historically unprecedented growth of the Hebrew population in Egypt startled the Egyptians. It took 215 years for the 70 lineal heirs of Jacob and their circumcised servants, plus circumcised converts who were adopted into Jacob's family line during the first 135 years in Egypt, to grow to 600,000 men, plus women and children.

Rapid, long-term population growth in response to covenantal faithfulness is one of the promised blessings of biblical law. A potentially greater blessing waited for them in the land of Canaan: no miscarriages, long lives, reduced sickness (Ex. 20:12; 23:25–26). These blessings did not occur; the continuing ethical rebellion of the Hebrews led instead to population stagnation, a curse.

A growing population is a tool of dominion. The humanists' hostility to population growth in the final decades of the twentieth century is part of a growing suspicion of all forms of economic growth. Growth points to an eventual using up of finite resources, including living space. This, in turn, points either to the end of growth or the end of time. The thought of an end of time within a few centuries is not acceptable to humanists. Therefore, they have instead attacked the concept of linear growth.

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21. Bertrand Russell, *The Prospects of Industrial Civilization*, 2nd ed. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), p. 273. First edition: 1923. He did not change his views enough to warrant a revision of this passage.

2

IMPERIAL BUREAUCRACY

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely [shrewdly] with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel

EXODUS 1:8–12

Who was this new Pharaoh? Old Testament scholars are divided, but Donovan Courville's reconstruction of Egyptian chronology points to Sesostris III.[1] A major transformation of the Egyptian system of rule was imposed by this Twelfth Dynasty Pharaoh. The political centralization of the pharaohs of the Pyramid Age had disintegrated. Egypt had become a feudal state. Courville wrote:

> During the period preceding Sesostris III, Egypt had existed as a feudal system, and historians speak of this period as the "feudal age." Under this arrangement, the territory of Egypt was divided into numerous local areas called nomes, over each of which was a prince or governor. He was not a servant of the Pharaoh and was permitted to rule undisturbed so long as he contributed his alloted quota to the king's treasury and perhaps to the army in case of need.... Under the reign of Sesostris III, this situation was changed. For the most part, these local princes were stripped of their power and stripped of their excessive possessions. For the first time in a hundred years or more, Egypt was now under the immediate and direct

1. Conventional historians date him as 1878–1839 B.C.

> dictatorship of the pharaoh.... From this time on, we find no more of the tombs of these princes nor of the prolific inscriptions which they had previously left."[2]

His centralization of political power was accompanied by an extensive building program. Courville argued that this program had to have been accomplished by means of slave labor. Furthermore, "Unlike the structures of the huge building program in the Pyramid Age, and again unlike that which occurred later in the XVIIIth Dynasty, this building was of brick and not of stone."[3] This corresponds with the account in the Book of Exodus: the Hebrews used bricks to fulfill their assignments (Ex. 1:14). Another important historical correlation is this: the building programs of Sesostris III and his successor, Amenemhet III, were in the eastern Delta region, which included the land of Goshen, where the Hebrews lived. The cities of Pi-Raamses and Pi-Thorn have been discovered in this region, but modern scholars have attributed the bulk of these ruins to Rameses II, a king of a much later date.[4] Courville argued also that the list of the Ramessides kings in the Sothis list correlates to the earlier line of kings,[5] which would explain why the land of Goshen was described as "the best in the land, in the land of Rameses" (Gen. 47:11).[6]

If Courville's identification of the Pharaoh of the oppression is incorrect, then what can we say with confidence? First, he did have an extensive military force at his disposal. He put into slavery a nation

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2. Donovan A. Courville, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications, 2 vols.* (Loma Linda, California: Challenge Books, 1971), I, pp. 146–47. Rawlinson commented on the career of Sesostris III (Usurtasen III): "At the head of disciplined troops he gained repeated victories over the half-armed and untrained races, in part negro, in part Ethiopic, of the south. By a continued merciless persecution, he so far intimidated them, that they were induced to submit to Egyptian supremacy, and to endure the loss of freedom and independence. As he understood the value of fortresses as a means of establishing a dominion, of riveting a detested yoke on a proud nation's neck, and of making revolt hopeless, if not impossible. He was also so far ambitious, so far desirous of posthumous fame, that he took care to have his deeds declared in words, and graven with an iron pen in the rock forever. But in this respect he merely followed the previous traditional practice of the Egyptian kings, while in his conquests he only a little exceeded the limits reached by more than one of his predecessors." George Rawlinson, *History of Ancient Egypt* (New York: John B. Alden, 1886), II, p. 86. This description certainly seems to fit the personality of the man who enslaved the Hebrews, though of course Rawlinson did not believe that Sesostris III was the Pharaoh of the oppression.

3. *Ibid.*, I, p. 147.

4. *Ibid.*, I, p. 148.

5. *Ibid.*, I, p. 149; cf. p. 120.

6. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 24, 33, 45.

of formerly independent people. Second, he was financially capable of building treasure cities. This would have required an extensive and well-developed taxation system. Third, he was ruthless, as his attempt to execute the Hebrew male infants indicates.

A. Egypt's Theology: The Continuity of Being

The religion of ancient Egypt, like all religious systems of the ancient Near East,[7] viewed history as a struggle between chaos and order. Our world had its origin in the primordial waters of the underworld, the Egyptians believed.[8] Atum, the original god, created two other gods (male and female), which in turn created two more, and these two created Osiris (male sun god) and Isis, who gave birth to Horus, the falcon god of the sky.[9] John A. Wilson concluded that chaos was not overcome by Re-Atum, the creator god, since the god of the underworld and the god of darkness continued to live, "but they continued in their proper places and not in universal and formless disorder."[10]

The Egyptians lacked a specific mythological account of the creation of man.[11] However, as Wilson made clear, basic to Egyptian mythology was the concept of *continuity*. "To be sure," wrote Wilson, "a man seems to be one thing, and the sky or a tree seems to be another. But to the ancient Egyptian such concepts had a protean and complementary nature. The sky might be thought of as a material vault above earth, or as a cow, or as a female. A tree might be a tree or the female who was the tree-goddess. Truth might be treated as an abstract concept, or as a goddess, or as a divine hero who once lived on earth. A god might be depicted as a man, or as a falcon, or as a falcon-headed man. . . . There was thus a continuing substance across the phenomena of the universe, whether organic, inorganic,

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7. Joseph Fontenrose, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and Its Origins* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), pp. 218–19, 473.

8. John A. Wilson, "Egypt," in Henri Frankfort, *et al., The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1946] 1977), p. 45. Penguin Books published a version of this book called *Before Philosophy*.

9. Rudolph Anthes, "Mythology of Ancient Egypt," in Samuel Noah Kramer (ed.), *Mythologies of the Ancient World* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1961), pp. 36–39. Anthes thought that the cosmology of Heliopolis, which was only one of the religious centers of Egypt, and only one of the Egyptian cosmologies, was more concerned with establishing the divinity of the king than with the actual details of creation: p. 40.

10. Wilson, "Egypt," *op. cit.*, p. 53.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.

or abstract."[12] There was no absolute distinction between creator and creature; instead, there was a continuity of being.

The doctrine of the continuity of being has a tendency to become the doctrine of the divinization of man. Furthermore, the divinization of man has an equally distinct tendency to become a doctrine of the divine State, or the divine Church, or the divine Church-State. The state, as the most concentrated power in human affairs, becomes the mediating institution between the gods and evolving mankind. We can see this in the history of Egyptian kingship. Wilson's summary is to the point: "The king of Egypt was himself one of the gods and was the land's representative among the gods. Furthermore, he was the one official intermediary between the people and the gods, the one recognized priest of all the gods. Endowed with divinity, the pharaoh had the protean character of divinity; he could merge with his fellow-gods and could become anyone of them. In part this was symbolic, the acting of a part in religious drama or the simile of praise. But the Egyptian did not distinguish between symbolism and participation; if he said that the king was Horus, he did not mean that the king was playing the part of Horus, he meant that the king was Horus, that the god was effectively present in the king's body during the particular activity in question."[13] The Pharaoh deputized priests to perform religious duties, just as he deputized bureaucratic functionaries to perform administrative duties, but state theory maintained that these deputies acted for him as the supreme incarnation of the gods. Egyptian theology was polytheistic, but it was also *monophysite*: ". . . many men and many gods, but all ultimately of one nature."[14]

To understand the enormous significance of the Hebrews' stay in Egypt, we have to understand the central position of the Pharaoh. Joseph's ability to interpret the king's dream and then to administer the collection and distribution of grain elevated the Pharaoh's position, reinforcing the traditional Egyptian state theology. Then, two centuries later, Moses smashed the very foundations of Egypt by smashing men's faith in their king's position as a divine figure. Again, citing Wilson: "The gods had sent him forth to tend mankind, but he was not of mankind. This is perhaps the most fitting picture of the good Egyptian ruler, that he was the herdsman for his people. . . . The herds-

12. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 64–65.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

man is primarily the pastor, the 'feeder,' and a first responsibility of the state was to see that the people were fed. Thus the king of Egypt was the god who brought fertility to Egypt, produced the life-giving waters, and presented the gods with the sheaf of grain which symbolized abundant food. Indeed, an essential function of his kingship was that of a medicine man, whose magic insured good crops. In one of the ceremonials of kingship, the pharaoh encircled a field four times as a rite of conferring fertility upon the land."[15]

God blessed Sesostris I through Joseph. The arrogance of power led Sesostris III, his great-grandson, to enslave the heirs of Joseph.[16] Within a century, Egypt was in ruins, under the domination of foreign invaders, the Hyksos (Amalekites). In the light of all this, we can better appreciate God's words to the (probable) Pharaoh of the exodus, Koncharis: "For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Ex. 9:15–6).

B. Slavery

The Pharaoh of the enslavement followed a pattern which had become familiar in the lives of the Hebrews. Like Laban in his dealings with Jacob, and Potiphar in his dealings with Joseph, the Pharaoh recognized the economic value of the Hebrews. At the same time, he resented certain concomitant aspects of Hebrew prouctivity, in this case, their fertility.[17] Yet he was unwilling to take the obvious defensive step, namely, to remove them from the land. He wanted to expropriate their productivity, to compel their service. It was not enough that they were in Egypt, bringing the land under dominion, filling the nation with productive workers. Their productivity was a threat to the Egyptian theocratic state. These foreigners did not serve Egyptian gods, nor did they acknowledge the divinity of the Pharaoh, the link between the gods and mankind. They were foreigners in Egypt,

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 78, 79–80.

16. Courville, *Exodus Problem*, I, p. 218.

17. Demographer William Peterson wrote: "The terms fecundity and fertility, originally used synonymously, were differentiated from one another only gradually. In 1934 the Population Association of America officially endorsed the distinction between fecundity, the physiological ability to reproduce, and fertility, the realization of this potential, the actual birth performance as measured by the number of offspring." William Peterson, *Population*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1969), p. 173.

and they threatened to fill up the land, making the Egyptians a minority population in their own nation. How, then, could the Egyptian state appropriate their obvious productivity without surrendering sovereignty to a foreign people and a foreign God? The answer, so familiar in the history of the ancient world, was slavery.

It is a fact of economic life that people always want to buy goods and services on more favorable terms than are presently available. They want "more for less," in other words. The Egyptians wanted a better deal. They hoped to gain the economic benefits of a godly people's productivity by offering (commanding) terms of employment that were hostile to long-term productivity. They hoped to enslave the Hebrews, making it impossible for them to revolt, or to replace Egyptian sovereignty, or to flee. Yet they also expected these slaves to remain as productive as before. The Pharaoh of the exodus even accused them of being lazy, and he burdened them with the task of gathering their own straw to manufacture bricks (Ex. 5:6–19). He wanted "more for less," or better stated, *he wanted the same output for reduced expenditures*. He hoped to pay less for his non-labor inputs and no more for labor inputs.

The Egyptians wanted the fruits of godly behavior and God's visible blessings without having to humble themselves before that God and His laws. *They believed that, by capturing God's people, they could enslave God Himself.* By enslaving the Israelites, they believed that it was possible to bring the God of the Israelites under subjection. This was a common belief of the ancient world: when a nation defeated another nation in battle, or otherwise subdued it, the gods of the defeated nation were themselves defeated.[18] The Egyptians thought that they could trap the God of the Hebrews, as someone might ensnare a wild stallion, by capturing its "harem." They would use the Hebrews as living amulets or talismans—magical devices that could be manipulated in order to call forth powers of the gods. They understood that the Hebrews had a special relationship with a God who provided them with wealth and knowledge. They knew that it was better to enslave such a people (and such a God) than to destroy them.

The Pharaoh of Joseph's day acknowledged Joseph's access to accurate secret knowledge, and he honored him and his family, transferring the sovereignty of the state to Joseph. He placed his own ring

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18. Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, [1864] 1955), Bk. III, ch. 15.

on Joseph's hand, arrayed him in fine linen and gold, and placed him in the second chariot after his own (Gen. 41:42–43). That Pharaoh bowed to God's sovereignty and to God's dream-mediated word, and his kingdom was blessed by God.

In contrast, the Pharaoh of the oppression wanted Jacob's heirs to produce on Egypt's terms, without the transfer of any of the king's sovereignty. He expected to be able to control and even reduce that fertility, while appropriating the fruits of their labor. He was wrong; their fertility continued, and he was forced to attempt the murder of all the male infants in order to stop this Hebrew population explosion (Ex. 1:15–19). He, like the Pharaoh of the exodus, found that he could not control God through His people. Laban had discovered the same thing in his dealings with Jacob.[19]

God's plan, not the plans of the pharaohs, was sovereign over Egyptian history. The Pharaoh of Joseph's day had recognized this, and Egypt had prospered because he was wise enough to transfer the symbols and prerogatives of state sovereignty to Joseph. His successors sought to reassert their self-proclaimed divine sovereignty over the Hebrews, and the Pharaoh of the Exodus saw Egypt's wealth and military power swallowed up.

C. The Bureaucratic Megamachine

It was not only the Hebrews who were enslaved. Sesostris III re-centralized the Egyptian social and political order. He began to construct treasure cities, indicating that he had begun to use tax revenues in order to strengthen the visible sovereignty of the central government. Centuries earlier, pharaohs had used state revenues to construct the giant pyramids, which were monuments to a theology of death and resurrection for the Pharaoh (and later, of the nobility). The Pharaoh of the oppression settled for less grandiose displays of his immediate sovereignty. By Joseph's day, the pharaohs no longer built pyramids. The total centralization of the Pyramid Age had disintegrated. Nevertheless, the theology of the continuity of being was still basic to Egyptian theology, and the lure of centralized power in the person of the Pharaoh was still ready to find its political expres-

19. "Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight" (Gen. 31:41–42).

sion. Although it is true that Joseph had bought all the land of Egypt, excepting only the land belonging to the priests (Gen. 47:20–22), in the name of the Pharaoh (Sesostris I), the visible and institutional manifestation of that implicit centralization (public works pyramids) did not take place until a century later. When Sesostris III abolished the prerogatives of the regional princes, simultaneously placing the Hebrews in bondage, he thereby asserted the sovereignty of *theocratic monophysitism*, with the Pharaoh as the link between heaven and earth. He formally reversed the special position of the Hebrews, which Sesostris I had acknowledged in return for special knowledge of the future—a special revelation that Joseph had stated came from God (Gen. 41:16), thereby placing the Pharaoh under God's control. Joseph had announced, "What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh" (Gen. 41:28), making plain the true source of history and agricultural productivity. Sesostris III attempted to deny any sovereignty other than his own, and in a massive centralization of political power, he cancelled the special position of both the Hebrews and the regional princes.[20]

1. Pyramids and Power

The Pyramid Age had demonstrated the degree to which a political order could be bureaucratized. Max Weber, the influential German historian-sociologist, devoted the last 15 years of his life to a series of studies on the West's tendency to rationalize and bureaucratize itself. In 1909, he wrote: "To this day there has never existed a bureaucracy which could compare with that of Egypt."[21] Lewis Mumford, who specialized in the history of architecture, concluded that nothing short of total bureaucratization would have enabled Egypt to construct its pyramids. More than this: it required the creation of a social machine. Egypt became the first megamachine, to use Mumford's terminology.[22] Egyptian society had to be molded along the lines of a pyramid—a hierarchy, with the divine Pharaoh as the capstone.

20. Courville, *Exodus Problem*, I, p. 146.

21. "Max Weber on Bureaucratization" (1909); in J. P. Mayer, *Max Weber and German Politics: A Study in Political Sociology* (London: Faber and Faber, [1943] 1956), p. 127.

22. Lewis Mumford, "The First Megamachine," *Daedalus* (1966); reprinted in Mumford, *Interpretations and Forecasts*: *1922–1972* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), ch. 24. It is an oddity of history that an essay on the Egyptian pyramid society should appear in a journal named after Daedalus, the legendary figure of Greek mythology who built King Minos' famous labyrinth on Crete. He supposedly learned the secret of the labyrinth from the Egyptians. See Appendix C: "The Garden and the Labyrinth."

The divinity of the king had to serve as the universal faith, given the magnitude of the undertaking.

> This extension of magnitude in every direction, this raising of the ceiling of human effort, this subordination of individual aptitudes and interests to the mechanical job in hand, and this unification of a multitude of subordinates to a single end that derived from the divine power exercised by the king, in turn, by the success of the result, confirmed that power.
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> For note: it was the king who uttered the original commands: it was the king who demanded absolute obedience and punished disobedience with torture, mutilation, or death: it was the king who alone had the godlike power of turning live men into dead mechanical objects: and finally it was the king who assembled the parts to form the machine and imposed a new discipline of mechanical organization, with the same regularity that moved the heavenly bodies on their undeviating course.
>
> No vegetation god, no fertility myth, could produce this kind of cold abstract order, this detachment of power from life. Only one empowered by the Sun God could remove all the hitherto respected norms or limits of human endeavor.[23]

The construction of the pyramids required a reliable organization of knowledge, both supernatural (priesthood) and technological (bureaucracy). The great Cheops (Khufu) pyramid contains at least 2,300,000 stone blocks, each weighing two and a half tons, on average.[24] These stone blocks, if cut into cubes one foot on each side, would circle two-thirds of the earth's surface at the equator. Such a construction task could not have been carried out without a bureaucratic transmission belt. It would not have been possible to build the pyramids apart from a significant *depersonalization* of the people who made up this massive human machine. Mumford summarized the nature of this bureaucratic machine:

> The removal of human dimensions and organic limits is indeed the chief boast of the authoritarian machine. Part of its productivity is due to the use of unstinted physical coercion to overcome human laziness or bodily fatigue. Occupational specialization was a necessary step in the assemblage of the human machine: only by intense specialization at every part of the process could the superhuman accuracy and perfection of the product have been achieved.... These human machines were by nature impersonal, if not deliberately dehumanized; they had to operate on a big scale or they could not work at all; for no bureaucracy, however well organized, could govern a thousand little workshops, each with its own traditions, its

23. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

24. Charles F. Pfeiffer and Howard F. Vos, *The Wycliffe Historical Geography of Bible Lands* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), p. 69.

own craft skills, its own willful personal pride and sense of responsibility. So the form of control imposed by kingship was confined to great collective enterprises."[25]

2. The Bureaucratization of Life

What kind of society emerges from an economic and political system that is determined to construct pyramids to glorify the eldest sons of a kingly line, and to glorify each one's transition from the god Horus to the god Osiris (at death)?[26] Such a bureaucratic society infringes upon the ability and responsibility of individuals to extend dominion across the earth. Such a *concentration of capital* in a single bureaucratic enterprise absorbs the resources that could otherwise be used to finance smaller, decentralized businesses. It also concentrates so much responsibility into the hands of a single monarch or bureaucratic regime that *an error on the part of the hierarchy can threaten the survival of the entire social order*. This is the kind of centralization, though on a less intense level, which brought down Egypt at the time of the exodus. *Egypt lived or died in terms of one man's decisions*: Joseph's Pharaoh (life) vs. Moses' Pharaoh (death).

Another important danger of bureaucracy is its lack of creativity. "Now the important part about the functioning of a classic bureaucracy," Mumford wrote, "is that it originates nothing: its function is to transmit, without alteration or deviation, the orders that come from above. No merely local information or human considerations may alter this inflexible transmission process—except by corruption. This administrative method ideally requires a studious repression of all the autonomous functions of the personality, and a readiness to perform the daily task with ritual exactitude. Not for the first time does such ritual exactitude enter into the process of work: indeed, it is highly unlikely that submission to colorless repetition would have been possible without the millennial discipline of religious ritual."[27] From top to bottom, in the massive Church-State of Egypt, ritual was dominant over ethics. *This kind of bureaucracy produces a static social order which eventually disintegrates from external pressures, or disintegrates from its own costs and its inability to generate productive resources*. Both events took place in Egypt: an early disintegration into feudalism, and then a revival of centralization during what conventional historians call the Twelfth

25. Mumford, *Interpretations and Forecasts*, p. 265.

26. Wilson, "Egypt," p. 74; E. O. James, *The Ancient Gods* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1960), p. 117.

27. Mumford, *Interpretations and Forecasts*, p. 266.

Dynasty (from Joseph to the fleeing of Moses), which was followed by national defeat immediately after the exodus. Then, after a century or more under the Hyksos (Amalekites), Egypt experienced a brief rise of power under the Eighteenth Dynasty,[28] and then further decline.

Egypt could not throw off the static rule of the pharaohs, for the Egyptians remained faithful to their monophysite theology, the continuity of being. The only major change, late in Egyptian history, long after the Exodus, was an extension of the process of divinization to the common man, so that he, too, might become Osiris after his death, as the pharaohs had before him.[29] Egyptian culture was remarkably stable; it was the longest-lived of all the ancient kingdoms, but it was "life through institutional death." E. O. James was correct when he referred to Egypt's characteristic feature as the *cult of the dead*, one which assumed "gigantic proportions."[30] The pyramids are the most visible, most impressive, and most representative monuments to Egyptian religion and society.[31]

D. The Cult of the Dead

The Egyptian cult of the dead was, in fact, a religion of death and rebirth. It was also a fertility cult. The voluminous and painstaking researches of E. A. Wallis Budge in the early years of the twentieth century made this clear. "The central figure of the ancient Egyptian religion was Osiris, and the chief fundamentals of his cult were the belief in his divinity, death, resurrection, and absolute control of the destinies of the bodies and souls of men. The central point of each Osir-ian's religion was his hope of resurrection in a transformed body and of immortality, which could only be realized by him through the death and resurrection of Osiris."[32]

Budge tried to reconstruct the basics of Egyptian religion without too extensive a reliance on the native Egyptian literature, since

28. Velikovsky argued cogently that the Egyptian king Shishak, mentioned in II Chronicles 12:2–4, was Thutmose III of the Eighteenth Dynasty: Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1952), pp. 152–55. The invasion of Israel by Shishak was in the fifth year of King Rehoboam: sometime around 969 B.C. This dating is over 500 years after the conventional dating of Thutmose Ill's dynasty, which is commonly placed in the early or mid-fifteenth century, B.C.

29. James, *Ancient Gods*, p. 61.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

31. The other major Egyptian design was the labyrinth, discussed in greater detail in Appendix C: "The Labyrinth and the Garden."

32. E. A. Wallis Budge, "Preface," *Osiris: The Egyptian Religion of Resurrection* (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, [1911] 1961), p. xi.

"we find that in no portion of it does there exist a text which is not associated with magic, that no text contains a connected statement of the purely religious beliefs which we know the Egyptians certainly possessed. . . ."[33] But magic was basic to Egyptian religion, as Moses' confrontation with the court magicians indicates. It will not do to attribute such "base characteristics" of Egyptian religion to later developments, as Budge did, and to link them with foreign gods.[34] The Egyptians believed in a *power religion*, in contrast to the ethics religion of the Hebrews.

The gods of the Egyptians remind us of the nature gods of the American Indians. Like the Amerindians, the Egyptians were polytheistic. Budge said in 1911 that Egyptologists knew then of at least three thousand different names of their gods. But he could not resist adding, as so many anthropologists add to their accounts of pagan polytheism, "the Egyptians believed in the existence of One Great God, self-produced, self-existent, almighty and eternal, Who created the 'gods,' the heavens and the sun, moon and stars in them, and the earth and everything on it, including man and beast, bird, fish, and reptile. They believed that he maintained in being everything which He had created, and that He was the support of the universe and the Lord of it all."[35] In short, the Egyptians supposedly believed in the same sort of distant, impotent god that late-nineteenth-century nominal Anglicans believed in, and this god was just about as important to the Egyptians in their daily lives as the Anglicans' god was to the English in 1900.

According to Budge, the Egyptians seldom even mentioned this god's name, "Neter." "No proof of any kind is forthcoming which shows that the Egyptians ever entirely forgot the existence of God, but they certainly seem to have believed that he had altogether ceased to interfere in human affairs, and was content to leave the destinies of men to the care of the gods and spirits."[36] In short, Budge implied, they were all basically Deists when it came to formal theism, and polytheists when it came to ritual. But ritual was the heart and soul of Egyptian religion.

Ethics vs. ritual: here is the heart of the difference between the Egyptians' religion of death and resurrection and the Hebrews' reli-

33. *Ibid*., p. xiii.
34. *Ibid*., p. xiv.
35. *Ibid*., pp. xxvii–xxviii.
36. *Ibid*., pp. xxviii–xxix.

gion of death and resurrection. Biblical religion places ethics above ritual. In the Book of Micah, we read: "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:6–8). In contrast, consider Budge's summary of the Egyptians' concern over resurrection, and their attempt to achieve this exalted state through the manipulation of physical means.

> Theirs was a world filled with demons that could be controlled only by magic, especially word magic. They were obsessed with the physical signs of death. He writes of the dynastic-era Egyptians that they attached supreme importance to the preservation and integrity of the dead body, and they adopted every means known to them to prevent its dismemberment and decay. They cleansed it and embalmed it with drugs, spices and balsams; they annointed it with aromatic oils and preservative fluids; they swathed it in hundreds of yards of linen bandages; and then they sealed it up in a coffin or sarcophagus, which they laid in a chamber hewn in the bowels of the mountain. All these things were done to protect the physical body against damp, dry rot and decay, and against the attacks of moth, beetles, worms and wild animals. But these were not the only enemies of the dead against which precautions had to be taken, for both the mummified body and the spiritual elements which had inhabited it upon earth had to be protected from a multitude of devils and fiends, and from the powers of darkness generally. These powers of evil had hideous and terrifying shapes and forms, and their haunts were well known, for they infested the region through which the road of the dead lay when passing from this world to the Kingdom of Osiris. The "great gods" were afraid of them, and were obliged to protect themselves by the use of spells and magical names, and words of power, which were composed and written down by Thoth. In fact it was believed in very early times in Egypt that Ra, the Sun god, owed his continued existence to the possession of a secret name with which Thoth provided him. And each morning the rising sun was menaced by a fearful monster called Aapep which lay hidden under the place of sunrise waiting to swallow up the solar disc. It was impossible, even for the Sun-god, to destroy this "Great Devil," but by reciting each morning the powerful spell with which Thoth had provided him he was able to paralyze all Aapep's limbs and rise upon this world.[37]

37. E. A. Wallis Budge, "Preface," *The Book of the Dead* (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, [1920] 1960), pp. xi–xii.

Theologically, it was the Egyptians who were in bondage. It was they who needed deliverance: ethical, political, and social. Instead, they enslaved those people whose God could alone grant Egypt the deliverance which all men need, the God who had granted them preliminary manifestations of His power and mercy under Joseph.

1. Death and Resurrection: The Contrast

The significant point here is the difference between the biblical and pagan views of death and resurrection. The places of the dead did not become centers of religion or culture for the Hebrews, nor were these locations considered the dwelling places of spirits, human or otherwise. They were just the caves or burial places of those who would one day be resurrected, either to life or death (Dan. 12:1–3). Death and resurrection were central concerns of both pagan and biblical religion, but the heart of biblical religion is ethics, not ritual. The center of the tabernacle and the temple was the Ark of the Covenant, and inside this Ark were the two copies of God's covenant with Israel, a covenant of ten "words" or commandments. It is this summary of God's laws of life, not the physical remains of death, which is primary in biblical religion.

The periodic celebrations of social renewal by the ancients—the chaos festivals—were their attempt to achieve *metaphysical renewal*. The very cosmos itself was to be reborn periodically through men's acts of ritual chaos. They believed in a *religion of revolution*. By ritually recreating the "time before time"—the time of the creation, meaning the advent of order out of disorder—pagans celebrated their concept of death and resurrection. In these festivals, of which the Caribbean's carnival and New Orleans' Mardi Gras are pale imitations, regeneration comes from below during a temporary cultural and ritual overthrow of all normal ethical and social standards.[38] They wanted *power from below*.[39] (A similar theology undergirded nineteenth-century and twentieth-century revolutionary movements of both the "right" and the "left."[40]

These chaos festivals find no parallel in Israel. Instead, *Israel's social*

38. Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1959), surveys many aspects of this theology, the religion of revolution. Eliade was correct in linking Marxism and chaos festivals: p. 149. Cf. Gary North, *Marx's Religion of Revolution: Regeneration Through Chaos* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1968] 1989), ch. 4: "The Cosmology of Chaos."

39. R. J. Rushdoony, "Power from Below," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, I (Winter 1974).

40. James Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

renewal was covenantal, when the people gathered annually for the Passover and other festivals, and *judicial*, when they gathered every seventh year for a national abolition of debt (Deut. 15:1–4),[41] the release of bondservants (Deut. 15:7–1), and the reading of the whole law to all people, including strangers (Deut. 31:10–3).[42] It was *covenantal renewal*, not a ritual renewal of the cosmos, which was paramount. They did not celebrate the creation, which was solely the work of God; instead, they celebrated their deliverance from Egypt by the power of God, in which they had participated historically. They were to *look backward* toward a real historical event of ethical and national deliverance, so that they could *look forward* in confidence to the coming of the Messiah-deliverer, who in turn would make possible the ultimate deliverance, their resurrection from the dead, so graphically revealed to Ezekiel in the vision of the resurrection of the dry bones of Israel (Ezek. 37).[43]

The theme of life after death is basic to most religions, and certainly to Egyptian religion. But there was a radical distinction between the Egyptian view and the Bible's. Life after death—the resurrection —for the Egyptians, as for those ancient pagan societies that imitated the Egyptian cult of the dead, was seen as a metaphysical extension of this life. The doctrine of the *continuity of being from man to God* on this side of the grave implies that there will be a *continuity of existence between man's life now and man's life in the resurrection*.

Therefore, ethical regeneration was not seen as being necessary now in order to make possible participation in the life of the renewed world beyond the grave. In such religions, there is only one kind of final resurrection: resurrection unto life. If a man can evolve into God, either on this side of the grave, or in the shadows of death, or through successive reincarnations, then God cannot require man before death to meet ethical standards that are appropriate to man as the image of God—an image that never can become God because of the absolute Creator-creature distinction.

In other words, the cult of the dead rested on the assumption that the kind of existence which men now enjoy is the same sort of life that they will enjoy beyond the grave. This is why pagan tombs have

41. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 36.

42. *Ibid*., ch. 76.

43. Partial fulfillment of this vision took place immediately after Christ's resurrection from the dead: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matt. 27:52–53).

their walls covered with paintings of hunters, or dancers, or people involved in sexual debauchery.[44] This is why Egyptian kings were buried with their gold and other valuables, including (sometimes) the bodies of their ritually executed wives.

The essence of such a religion is *metaphysics*, not a final judgment based on God's specially revealed ethics. There is no ethical transformation required of man, no regeneration of man by God's grace, this side of the grave. Ritual and magic—man's manipulation of the cosmos, man's manipulation of God—are substituted for ethics as the basis of the man's transition from this life through death to resurrection. Man's departed spirit must draw the labyrinth pattern to perfection, or utter the proper words to the guardian of the gate, or greet the guardian with the proper handshake. Man needs to be wearing the proper clothing or amulet at the time of death, or be buried according to tradition, or have the proper prayer prayed over him by the priest (just before death or soon thereafter), or have the ancient rites performed on schedule by the family's future priest-patriarchs down through the generations. Such practices testify to a religion's adherence to aspects of the satanic delusion.

The conflict between Moses and Pharaoh involved the clash between two radically different concepts of death and resurrection, of salvation and final judgment. One was overwhelmingly ritualistic and metaphysical; the other was distinctly ethical and judicial. One was linked to salvation through ritual chaos; the other was linked to regeneration through faith and adherence to revealed, fixed, ethical law. One deified man; the other did not. One venerated the dead; the other did not. One was a fertility cult; the other was not. As Wunderlich remarked: "The idea of a link between veneration of the dead and a fertility cult runs counter to our modern ways of thinking. But there is a close connection, so close that we might almost speak of the cult of the dead as a form of fertility magic.... It is based on an ancient belief that the dead know the future. Ancestors are also responsible for providing for the continuation of the race."[45]

Such a view of the legitimacy of consulting the dead is utterly foreign to biblical religion. The one example in the Bible of a Hebrew leader consulting the dead was Saul's use of the witch of Endor—a

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44. The paintings on the walls of the so-called "Palace of Minos" on Crete probably are tomb paintings. It was not a palace. It was an elaborate grave. See Hans George Wunderlich, *The Secret of Crete* (New York: Macmillan, 1974).

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 294–95, 295–96.

"medium" with a familiar spirit (I Sam. 28:7)—who called up Samuel from the dead. This was in direct violation of Leviticus 19:31. God cut Saul off the very next day, as Samuel told him (I Sam. 28:19), thereby fulfilling the law's warning: "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people" (Lev. 20:6). The use of the word "whoring" points to the fertility cult aspects of the cult of the dead.

Neither system could be reconciled with the other. There could be a temporary truce between them, but ultimately one or the other had to triumph. The confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh was to determine which system would surrender to, or be defeated by the other. God made it clear in advance to Pharaoh just which system would lose: "For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Ex. 9:15–16).

2. A Digression on Greece

It is revealing that Wunderlich, whose intellectual reconstruction of the Egypt-influenced supposed palace of Knossos—the Bronze Age, labyrinth-based mausoleum venerating the cult of the dead on the island of Crete—recognized that *only sterility and stagnation could result from the cult of the dead*. But instead of looking to Christianity for an answer as to how the ancient world eventually escaped from this cult, he looked to the classical Greeks. He saw the classical Greeks as the inheritors of Knossos. It was they, he argued, who converted the rituals of death, including funeral plays, into a celebration of life. He asserted that this transformation was the origin of Western civilization.[46]

He failed to acknowledge just how oppressed Greek culture was by the fear of spirits, departed souls, and demons. He looked to Olympus for his explanation of the Greeks, rather than to the underground gods that dominated their lives.[47] He looked to a political religion,

46. Wunderlich, ch. 25: "The Origin of Western Civilization."

47. Jane Ellen Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, [1922] 1991); *Epilogomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1921), and *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion*, 2nd ed. (London: Cambridge University Press, [1912] 1927). See also John Cuthbert Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1910).

the Olympian gods and Olympian myths, rather than to demonology, which was the real religion of Greece.

Olympic mythology temporarily unified some of the city-states of Greece, and it bonded local families to particular city-states. Today it still unifies humanist historians and anthropologists. That fleeting century of Athenian democracy in the fifth century, B.C. continues to hypnotize Western scholars. It was a century of war and the reckless expansion of Athenian political power, which ultimately led to the downfall of Athens (when their gold ran out) to Sparta, and later to the fall of Greece to the Macedonians. *Periclean Athens was a massive welfare state* in which the state built huge public works projects, organized public assistance, offered pensions to the disabled, subsidized bread purchases, established price controls on bread, imposed export controls, established free theater programs for the poor, and regulated corn merchants.[48] The "bread and circuses" political religion of Athens ended in an enforced inter-city alliance, war with Sparta, defeat, tyranny, and finally the loss to Macedon. That is the fate of all bread and circus religions.

Athens worshiped politics with all its being, on a scale barely understood by most historians. It was understood by Glotz.

> Five hundred citizens were to sit in the Boule for a whole year. The heliasts, whose functions were originally confined to hearing appeals against awards made by the magistrates, were now to judge in first instance and without appeal the increasingly numerous cases in which citizens of Athens and the confederate towns were involved: they formed a body of six thousand members of which half on an average were in session every working day. There were ten thousand officials within the country or outside, five hundred wardens of arsenals, etc. Thus public affairs did not merely demand the intermittent presence of all the citizens of the Assembly; they required besides the constant exertions of more than a third of them.[49]

Consider this: one-third of all the estimated 35,000 to 44,000 resident male citizens of Athens in the year 431 B.C. were in state service.[50] At least 20,000 were "eating public bread," meaning that they were either on the payroll or on the dole.[51] The legend of Pericles, the legend of Athenian democracy, and the legend of Olympus constitute

48. G. Glotz, *The Greek City and Its Institutions* (New York: Barnes and Noble, [1929] 1969), pp. 131–32.

49. *Ibid*. p. 126.

50. Alfred E. Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth: Politics and Economics in Fifth-Century Athens* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1915), p. 172.

51. *Ibid*. pp. 172–73.

the basis of the legend—a Renaissance legend—of the glory that was Athens and the greatness that was Greece. It is the most enduring of all Greek myths.[52]

E. The Denial of Time

What kind of society was early dynastic Egypt, the Egypt of the Pyramid Age? Mumford's words ring true.

> Bureaucratic regimentation was in fact part of the larger regimentation of life, introduced by this power-centered culture. Nothing emerges more clearly from the Pyramid texts themselves, with their wearisome repetitions of formulae, than a colossal capacity for enduring monotony: a capacity that anticipates the universal boredom achieved in our own day. Even the poetry of both early Egypt and Babylonia reveal this iterative hypnosis: the same words, in the same order, with no gain in meaning, repeated a dozen times—or a hundred times. This verbal compulsiveness is the psychical side of the systematic compulsion that brought the labor machine into existence. Only those who were sufficiently docile to endure this regimen at every stage from command to execution could become an effective unit in the human machine.[53]

The culture denied linear time. It substituted endless repetition for progress, monotony for hope.

While the re-centralization of power by the Pharaoh of the oppression did not revive the enormous capital outlays of the Pyramid Age, it did reflect more accurately than feudalism Egypt's theology of the continuity of being. It did establish slavery, and it did involve the construction of state-worshipping public works projects. In the era of the oppression and the exodus, Egypt's presuppositions concerning the true nature of God, man, and law were manifested in the new bureaucratization.

Here was a culture devoid of any concept of progress, a culture which ignored its own history, except insofar as it built monuments to the dead. It did not even have an accurate chronology of its own kings, as Courville's study demonstrates. The Greeks paid more attention to Egypt's dynastic chronology than the later Egyptians did. Egypt was a society without a future, so it was not particularly concerned about its past. As Wilson wrote, "For the Jews the future is normative. For the Egyptians, on the other hand, the past was normative; and no

52. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), Appendix D.

53. Mumford, "First Megamachine," *Interpretations and Forecasts*, p. 266.

pharaoh could hope to achieve more than the establishment of the conditions as they were in the time of Re, in the beginning."[54] The state would, at best, be able to preserve the status quo. Static peace, not any fundamental alteration, was the ideal, despite the fact that certain kings —Sesostris III, Thutmose III—were able to expand the dynasty's limits at least as far as Asia Minor.

The Egyptians believed that the creation originated in chaos. Here is the reigning cosmological vision of all pagan thought, from Egypt to Darwin, from Babel to Marx: *order developed from chaos and is in perpetual tension with chaos*. Mircea Eliade's voluminous studies surveyed this theme in dozens of pagan cosmologies, and Egypt was no exception. Rushdoony summarized this theme in ancient religion: "True social order requires peace and communication with both chaos and deity, and society either moves downward into chaos or forward into deification. The significance of the Tower of Babel is thus apparent: it denied the discontinuity of God's being and asserted man's claim to a continuity of being with God and heaven. The Tower was the *gate* to God and *gate* of God, signifying that man's social order made possible an ascent of being into the divine order. The Egyptian pyramid set forth the same faith."[55] Egyptian culture was inescapably statist. "The one and the many were brought together in the person of the king. The Egyptian language had no word for 'state.' For them, the state was not one institution among many but rather the essence of the divine order for life and the means of communication between heaven, earth, and hell. Life therefore was totally and inescapably statist. In this perspective, anything resembling liberty and individuality in the contemporary sense was alien and impossible. . . . Deification was entry into the oneness of the divine order, and membership in the state in this life was similarly participation in the divine oneness manifested in the pharaoh and protection against the horror of chaos and meaningless particularity."[56] The product of such a theology was imperial bureaucracy.

The Pharaoh of Moses' day looked at the remarkable growth of the Hebrew population, even in the face of affliction, and he grew fearful. What if these people allied themselves to an invading army? How was it that they could multiply like this? What would stop their

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54. Wilson, "Egypt," *Intellectual Adventure*, p. 26.

55. R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1971] 2008), p. 43.

56. *Ibid*., pp. 47–48.

growth? This population growth, promised to Abraham four centuries before (Gen. 17:2), was a threat to all the plans of the Pharaoh—an uncontrolled factor in a human megamachine. Growth, in a static culture represents a frightening challenge, something beyond the calculations of the planning agencies. Uncontrolled growth—growth outside the bureaucratic plan—is a destabilizing factor for planned economies. Pharaoh knew that it had to be thwarted. Yet he was powerless to call it to a halt.

Conclusion

Imperial bureaucracy is one of the two major political manifestations of the society of Satan.[57] The other is anarchism. *Imperial bureaucracy is a top-down system of central planning*. It inescapably rests on the presupposition (stated or implied) that the planners are near-gods, that they have sufficient imagination and a God-like comprehensive knowledge to set forth their decrees, and that their words shall come to pass. Imperial bureaucracy is produced whenever men believe that at least some men—the central planning elite—are essentially divine, or what is the same thing, that they have no god above them to whom their subjects (slaves) can successfully appeal.

The idea of imperial bureaucracy therefore rests on the idea of the continuity of being: *from God to the planning elite*, who are the representatives of the people (who may or may not be considered part of this continuity of being).

The Egyptian state created a bureaucracy so vast, so all-encompassing, that nothing in man's history rivaled it until the rise of the modern industrialized socialist commonwealths. The state enshrined the cult of the dead in a desperate attempt to achieve life beyond the grave.[58] Life was seen as static, something that possesses unchanging continuity with life after death, at least for the Pharaoh. This static culture was statist to the core.

When the exodus came, it did not simply free an enslaved population from physical bondage. It freed them from a static, hopeless society that was doomed, even if economically successful for the kings and nobles, to endless boredom—a kind of living death. *The "living"*

57. The best account I have ever read on this subject is R. J. Rushdoony's 1964 essay, "The Society of Satan," reprinted in *Biblical Economics Today*, II (Oct./Nov. 1979).

58. In the Soviet Union, Lenin's tomb became the national shrine. They kept his embalmed body in a glass case for the masses to visit. The body remains on display in 2012.

death of a Pharaoh's mummy was mirrored in the living death of the society. God delivered Israel from a society that was based on the theology of the divine State. No king in Israel ever claimed to be divine, for only God has that right of absolute sovereignty. The people of Israel, even under the worst of Israel's kings, were never again to live within the imperial bureaucracy of a centralized divine order, except when they were again in bondage to foreign rulers.

The freedom that God provided for them was comprehensive, and the heart of this freedom was religious: the denial of absolute sovereignty any place on earth except in God's "holy of holies" in His temple, the center of which was the ark which contained the summary of His law. There is sovereignty only in God's word, not in the secret labyrinth recesses of some dead man's pyramid.

3

RIGOROUS WASTE AND RIGOROUS SOCIALISM

The Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them to serve, was with rigour.

EXODUS 1:13–14

A. Slavery and Waste

The Egyptians subjugated the Israelites. The language of this passage indicates a grinding servitude, for it lists a seven-fold subjection: serve, rigor, bondage, slavery, service, serve, and rigor.[1] Unquestionably, the Egyptians were able to extract extensive labor services out of these captives. This period of servitude may have lasted over a century; certainly, it lasted from Moses' birth until the exodus, 80 years later. Given the Old Testament's familiar 40-year period of servitude and "wilderness wandering," I believe that 80 years is more likely. Therefore, we might be tempted to conclude that the Egyptians were the beneficiaries of the Hebrews' labor services. Nevertheless, in retrospect, the Egyptians (through the decisions of their sovereigns, the pharaohs) made a disastrous error in their estimate of costs and benefits. They overestimated the benefits of the Hebrews' productivity, and they underestimated the costs of enslaving them. As they learned after the exodus, if Courville's reconstructed chronology is correct, a nation is defenseless without its army. The invading Amalekites,

1. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, [1951] 1974), p. 12. The word for "slave labor" occurs five times, and the word "rigor" appears twice. A seven-fold emphasis appears also in verse 7, which lists seven aspects of Israel's population growth. If Cassuto is correct in his assertion that the number 7 is "indicative of perfection" (p. 9), then Egypt's oppression was perfectly horrible.

meaning the Hyksos, who are identified by conventional historians as the shepherd kings, were able to conquer them. The Egyptians lost their Hebrew labor force, and they became the servants (slaves).[2]

It is hard to understand how so valuable an economic resource as human labor might be wasted in a slave system, yet economics informs us that *excessive waste is characteristic of any slave economy which is not closely linked to a free market*. It is the institution of a competitive market which enables slave owners to assess the productivity of the slaves. The South's slave system of the United States prior to the Civil War (1861–65) appears to have been a profitable institutional arrangement for the slave-owning planters,[3] but they operated within a free market, and they produced cash crops, especially cotton, which were sold in worldwide markets. Slaves were sold at price-competitive auctions, and a re-sale market existed. The output of the slaves could be calculated rationally. Owners and renters (slaves were sometimes rented out) could make estimates of costs and benefits within the framework of a money economy that possessed a high degree of economic specialization.

The Egyptians used the Hebrews to construct treasure cities, or storehouse cities, made of brick. They also used them in the fields. However, we must recognize that treasure cities were huge public works projects built for the Pharaoh. They were statist enterprises, not market enterprises. Furthermore, there was almost certainly no open market for the bulk of these Hebrew slaves, as if all branches of the Egyptian government were competitively pitted against each other in an open auction for slaves' services. This is not to say that all the slaves were held by the state, but it is likely that the majority of them were. When the Pharaoh imposed the punishment that they gather their own straw for brick-making, he was acting as a political sovereign. The punishment made sense only as a political-theologi-

2. Immanuel Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1952), ch. 2.

3. Alfred H. Conrad and John R. Meyer, "The Economics of Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South," *The Journal of Political Economy*, LXVI (April 1966); reprinted in Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman (eds.), *The Reinterpretation of American Economic History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). Cf. Fogel and Engerman, "The Economics of Slavery," *ibid*., and Yasukichi Yasuba, "The Profitability and Viability of Plantation Slavery in the United States," *The Economic Studies Quarterly*, XII (Sept. 1961), in *ibid*. For a general introduction to the question of the profitability of slavery in the American South, see Harold D. Woodman (ed.), *Slavery and the Southern Economy: Sources and Readings* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966). The essays in this collection are older, written before the advent of the "new economic history," with its statistical techniques and econometric market models.

cal-military decision, not as a profit-seeking economic measure (Ex. 5:5–7). Such a restraint on productivity made sense only within the framework of a state-operated construction program in which the slaves were an instrument of state power.

The Pharaoh, in any case, was the owner of all Egypt (Gen. 47:20). He was the official source of meaning in the cosmos. He was responsible for allocating scarce economic resources for the benefit of the state. The economic estimations of the Pharaoh, not the estimations of acting buyers and sellers in free markets, were the standards of economic value. It was incumbent on the Pharaoh to make accurate cost-benefit estimates if the nation was to prosper. "The king," wrote Frankfort, "is not only instrumental in producing the 'fat of the land'; he must also dispense it. Only then is there evidence that he functions effectively. If his bounty proves that he disposes, as a king should dispose, of the earth and its produce.... But the king also keeps alive the hearts of all those subjects who do not directly partake of his bounty. For he exercises a never ending mysterious activity on the strength of which daily, hourly, nature and society are integrated."[4] The king was understood to direct the very forces of nature. It was the king, and only the king, whose judgments concerning economic production were sovereign.

B. Economic Calculation

When the Pharaoh enslaved the Hebrews, he made a cost-benefit analysis. He concluded that the risks in allowing them to remain free were too high (Ex. 1:10). He concluded that the risks of breaking Egypt's covenant with the Hebrews—and, by implication, with their God—were minimal. He decided that any loss of productivity on their part could be compensated for, assuming his taskmasters used whips and other coercive measures to compel their hard labor. In other words, he concluded that sheer force, and not the profit opportunities of a free market, was the best means of extracting valuable labor services from them. He forfeited the productivity of a profit-seeking people who willingly bore the costs of their own actions. He concluded that coercion was more efficient in extracting their services, despite the necessity of having to feed them, supervise them constantly, and continually pressure them to greater output. In short, he underestimated

4. Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1948] 1962), pp. 59–60.

the productivity-engendering features of a free market, and he overestimated the benefits of coercion. When they left Egypt triumphantly, after God had reduced Egypt's economy by means of plagues and spoils, *the Egyptians learned just what kind of economic losses a nation can sustain as a result of kings' errors in cost-benefit analysis*.

The Hebrews worked very hard. Did this ensure their productivity? Can we conclude that hard work is efficient work? How do we measure or calculate efficient labor? How could the Egyptians have made such estimations? How did they know when they were getting "their money's worth" out of these slaves?

If we accepted the labor theory of value, we would have to conclude that no matter what they were assigned to achieve, their rigorous efforts must have produced profitable results. This is a good argument against the labor theory of value. But how can anyone measure efficiency if there are no profits? A socialist economy has no profits and losses to compare. A divine monarch does not permit a free market in labor services, once he enslaves a people.

Slavery in Egypt in Moses' day meant hard labor in constructing treasure cities. Hard work led to waste on a massive scale. The slaves' efforts benefited the king, and *the Egyptians paid for their king's public works projects in many ways*: lost labor that the Hebrews might have provided the general population, lost raw materials that went into the projects, and the greatest cost of all, the growing wrath of God, which would culminate in the destruction of the economy, the Pharaoh, and the army. The enslaving kings no doubt were satisfied with the transaction; the people, governed by a false theology, temporarily may have approved; but the end result was unmitigated destruction.

The mere expenditure of human effort on state public works projects does not guarantee a return on the investment that is positive. Without a free market, in which the competing bids of buyers and sellers of resources determine the allocation of scarce resources, there is no way for the state's officials to calculate economic value accurately. They can only make estimates, but *there is no self-correcting information system* available to inform them of the accuracy or inaccuracy of their judgments.

Egypt had a theology that asserted the ability of the Pharaoh to make such judgments, which is precisely the theology a consistent socialist commonwealth must have if it is to be a valid substitute for a market economy. The integration of all economic plans can be furthered by the market, or it can theoretically be accomplished by

an omniscient agency; in Egypt's case, this agency was supposedly the Pharaoh. "He was a lonely being, this god-king of Egypt," wrote Wilson. "All by himself he stood between humans and gods. Texts and scenes emphasize his solitary responsibility. The temple scenes show him as the only priest in ceremonies with the gods. A hymn to a god states: 'There is no one else that knows thee except thy son, (the king), whom thou causest to understand thy plans and power.' It was the king who built temples and cities, who won battles, who made laws, who collected taxes, or who provided the bounty for the tombs of his nobles."[5] Egypt possessed the necessary theology for a consistent socialist commonwealth, but this theology was wrong, as the Egyptians learned in the year of the exodus. The king did not possess omniscience; he did not know what the true costs of enslaving the Hebrews really were.

The pharaohs who constructed the mighty pyramids of the Old Kingdom had weakened the Egyptian economy drastically. Wilson described these structures quite accurately: huge, non-economic construction projects that were supposed to last for eternity, but which had to be followed by more of them in each generation.[6] The brick pyramids of the later pharaohs were not equally majestic, but their construction involved comparable problems. Were they cost-effective? Only the Pharaoh could decide, since there was no free market available for men to use as a means of evaluating the true costs involved. The Hebrews were forced to work *rigorously*, but this could not guarantee that they were working *efficiently*. The wit's definition of modern commercialism applies to the Pharaoh's pyramids and cities: something done magnificently which should not have been done at all. The Pharaoh, as a divinity, was supposed to know what ultimate value really is, but he was not divine, so he faced the inescapable economic problem that has baffled all central planners, namely, *the impossibility of making rational economic calculations in an economy without competitive free markets*. This is the problem described by Ludwig von Mises as the problem of economic calculation in a socialist commonwealth.[7] An economy without competitive markets is an economy

5. John A. Wilson, "Egypt," in Henri Frankfort, *et al., The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1946] 1977), p. 77.

6. John A. Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt: An Interpretation of Ancient Egyptian Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1951] 1967), p. 98.

7. Ludwig von Mises, "Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth," (1920), in F. A. Hayek (ed.), *Collectivist Economic Planning* (London: Routledge & Kegan

without rational economic guidelines. It is an economy which is "flying blind."

The central planner does not know what slave labor is really worth, for such labor commands no free market price. He does not know what the true cost of his capital equipment is, since there is no competitive market for capital goods. The Pharaoh, like any other socialist planner, could only guess. All he could do was to make intuitive judgments about what his cities were worth to him and what the actual costs of production really were. The larger the scope of the projects, and the larger the slave labor supply, the more difficult it was to make such intuitive estimates apart from fully competitive prices. But competitive pricing is precisely what socialist economic planning denies.

C. Socialism's Economic Miscalculation

Mises commented at some length on this problem of economic calculation in his book, *Socialism* (1922).

> Let us try to imagine the position of a socialist community. There will be hundreds and thousands of establishments in which work is going on. A minority of these will produce goods ready for use. The majority will produce capital goods and semi-manufactures. All these establishments will be closely connected. Each commodity produced will pass through a whole series of such establishments before it is ready for consumption. Yet in the incessant press of all these processes the economic administration will have no real sense of direction. It will have no means of ascertaining whether a given piece of work is really necessary, whether labour and material are not being wasted in completing it. How would it discover which of two processes was the most satisfactory? At best, it could compare the quantity of ultimate products. But only rarely could it compare the expenditure incurred in their production. It would know exactly—or it would imagine it knew—what it wanted to produce. It ought therefore to set about obtaining the desired results with the smallest possible expenditure. But to do this it would have to be able to make calculations. And such calculations must be calculations of value. They could not be merely 'technical,' they could not be calculations of the objective use-value of goods and services.... The economic administration may indeed know

Paul, [1935] 1963), ch. 3. Cf. Mises, S*ocialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, [1922] 1951), Pt. II. This has been reprinted in both hardback and paperback editions in 1981 by Liberty Classics, Indianapolis, Indiana. See also Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), chaps. 7–9; T. J. B. Hoff, *Economic Calculation in the Socialist Society* (London: Hodge & Co. 1948).

> exactly what commodities are needed most urgently. But this is only half the problem. The other half, the valuation of the means of production, it cannot solve. It can ascertain the value of the totality of such instruments. That is obviously equal to the satisfactions they afford. If it calculates the loss that would be incurred by withdrawing them, it can also ascertain the value of single instruments of production. But it cannot assimilate them to a common price denominator, as can be done under a system of economic freedom and money prices.[8]

Mises was too generous here to his ideological opponents, the socialists. Unless the state is defined as the desires of one man, which is what the Pharaoh could claim, it is not possible for socialist planners to "know exactly what commodities are needed most urgently." They cannot possibly ascertain "the value of the totality of such instruments," precisely because no planning agency can ever estimate "the satisfactions they afford." The satisfactions afforded to a multitude of citizens by any single mix of consumer goods cannot possibly be known; they can only be guessed at. Furthermore, *there is no way for the socialist planners to judge the failure of their estimations outside of massive revolution by the victimized consumers*—a contingency made less likely by the systematic repression by the police and military leaders of most socialist commonwealths. They know that they cannot possibly make such calculations accurately, and so they spend great quantities of sorely needed capital on the suppression of potentially violent consumer dissatisfaction.

Rothbard's summary of Mises' argument is illuminating: "In short, if there were no market for a product, and all of its exchanges were internal, there would be no way for a firm or for anyone else to determine a price for the good. A firm can estimate an implicit price when an external market exists; but when a market is absent, the good can have no price, whether implicit or explicit. Any figure could then be only an arbitrary symbol. Not being able to calculate a price, the firm could not rationally allocate factors and resources from one stage to another."[9] In fact, Rothbard concluded, *a universal monopoly by one great corporation is theoretically impossible*, because a universal monopoly would have no market-determined array of prices to guide its production decisions. "As the area of incalculability increases, the degrees of irrationality, misallocation, loss, impoverishment, etc., become greater. Under *one* owner or *one* cartel for the whole productive

8. Mises, *Socialism*, pp. 120–21.

9. Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, 2nd ed. (Auburn, Alabama: Ludwig von Mises Institute, [1962] 2009), p. 613.

system, there would be no possible areas of calculation at all, and therefore complete economic chaos would prevail."[10] Nevertheless, this kind of universal ownership was precisely what the pharaohs had attempted to create ever since Joseph's day. Only to the extent that a particular pharaoh would turn his back on his theoretical ownership of Egypt, and would allow independent buyers and sellers to produce for a free market in goods and services, could the Egyptian economy reverse its drift into economic chaos.

1. Lange's "Refutation" of Mises

There was an attempt by a Polish Communist economist of the 1930s, Oskar Lange, to refute Mises by arguing that socialist economies can use prices to allocate production rationally.[11] These would be hypothetical prices, established initially on a purely arbitrary basis by the central planners. If supplies cleared the markets, the price structure would be left unchanged. If not, prices would be changed until production did clear all markets.[12]

This argument ignores many things, such as the possibility of any central planning agency's establishing an initial array of prices for millions of consumer goods and services, or even the basic raw materials and capital, both human and physical, that would be needed to produce these goods. Second, if there is no private ownership, especially of capital goods, how can customers enforce their preferences on the planners? So what if markets do not clear? So what if some firms do poorly? Since no one owns them, how can the central planners act as surrogates for customers and persuade all managers to produce the proper number and quality of goods? Third, why would central

10. *Ibid.*, p. 614.

11. Lange wrote: "Socialists have certainly good reason to be grateful to Professor Mises, the great advocatus diaboli of their cause. For it was his powerful challenge that forced the socialists to recognize the importance of an adequate system of economic accounting to guide the allocation of resources in a socialist economy. Even more, it was chiefly due to Professor Mises' challenge that many socialists became aware of the very existence of such a problem. And although Professor Mises was not the first to raise it, and although not all socialists were as completely unaware of the problem as is frequently held, nevertheless, that, particularly on the European Continent (outside of Italy), the merit of having caused the socialists to approach this problem systematically belongs entirely to Professor Mises. Both as an expression of recognition for the great service rendered by him and as a memento of the prime importance of sound economic reasoning, a statue of Professor Mises ought to occupy an honorable place in the great hall of the Ministry of Socialization or of the Central Planning Board of the socialist state." Lange, in Oskar Lange and Fred M. Taylor, *On the Economic Theory of Socialism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, [1938] 1956), pp. 57–58.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 70–98. For a refutation of Lange, see Hoff, *Economic Calculation*.

planners want to enforce the preferences of customers on managers? After all, we are speaking of self-conscious slave-holding societies. What was the Soviet Union's Gulag Archipelago of labor camps, with its millions of inmates, if not a system of slavery?

It is revealing that no socialist economic commonwealth has ever adopted Lange's hypothetical "solution" to the objections raised by Mises. Lange returned to his native Poland after the Communists took over the country in 1945. He did not become Poland's minister of economics. Poland never attempted to implement his theory. What is even more revealing is that the myth of Lange's supposed "refutation" was still found in textbooks on comparative economic systems in 1985, when this book first appeared. Mises' 1920 essay and his book, *Socialism*, were never cited; only brief references are made to Lange's supposed answer. Only in 1990, as the Soviet Union was collapsing economically, did one prominent socialist economist admit in public that Mises had been right. He admitted that socialism is not as efficient as the free market is. He admitted that the economics profession had ignored Mises and praised Lange for over half a century. He did so, not in a scholarly economics journal, but in a literary magazine, *The New Yorker*.[13]

2. Flying Blind

The socialists may believe that the systematic planning of specialized agencies will lead to a huge increase in productivity. They may believe that the co-ordination of all segments of a nation's economy can be achieved only by central planning. They may believe that people will work rigorously and therefore effectively only when compelled to do so in the name of the sovereign political order. What we learn from Israel's experience in bondage is the opposite. Men can serve the state rigorously, but *the centrally planned state is economically blind*. The state may indeed overcome the so-called "anarchy" of an unregulated free market, but this in no way assures the triumph of economic rationality. As Mises wrote in 1922: "Instead of the economy of 'anarchical' production, the senseless order of an irrational machine would be supreme. The wheels would go round, but to no effect."[14] Without the ability to calculate the value of any resource's contribution to the

13. Robert Heilbroner, "After Communism," *The New Yorker* (Sept. 10, 1990). Heilbroner, who became a multimillionaire from royalties on his book, *The Worldly Philosophers*, a study of the major economists, did not even mention Mises in his book.

14. Mises, *Socialism*, p. 120.

economy, and its economic burden on the economy as it is used up, the socialist central planning agency is "flying blind." Without a free market, especially a free market in capital goods, it is impossible for central planners to make any more than woefully uneducated guesses concerning economic costs and benefits. No economically rational prices exist to guide them in their task. The longer they do without a market economy, the less educated are their guesses.

A fine summary of the problem of economic calculation in a socialist commonwealth was provided by I. Borovitski, a disgruntled enterprise manager in the Soviet Union, in 1962. He complained in the newspaper, *Pravda* (Oct. 5, 1962):

> The department of Gosplan [the Soviet central planning agency—G.N.] which drafts the production program for Sovnarkhozy [regional economic councils—G.N.] and enterprises is totally uninterested in costs and profits. Ask the senior official in the production program department in what factor it is cheaper to produce this or that commodity? He has no idea, and never even puts the question to himself. He is responsible only for the distribution of production tasks. Another department, not really concerned with the costs of production, decides on the plan for gross output. A third department or sub-department, proceeding from the principle that costs must always decline and labor productivity increase, plans costs, wages fund and labor on the basis of past performance. Material allocations and components are planned by numerous other departments. Not a single department of Gosplan is responsible for the consistency of these plans.[15]

Furthermore, if such a department existed, it would still be helpless. It would possess no reliable information concerning competitive prices by which to estimate economic costs.

D. Oppression and Misallocated Resources

When the Pharaoh enslaved the Hebrews, he reduced the economic rationality of the Egyptian nation. When he and his successors began to use the labor of the Hebrews to construct treasure cities, they took another step in the direction of economic irrationality and tyranny, for they were extracting these labor services from the customer-oriented markets and redirecting them into statist projects. These proj-

15. Cited by Alec Nove, *The Soviet Economy: An Introduction*, rev. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 207. Cf. Gary North, "The Crisis in Soviet Economic Planning," *Modern Age*, XIV (1969–70); reprinted in North, *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), ch. 22. See also Gary North, *Marx's Religion of Revolution: Regeneration Through Chaos* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1968] 1989), Appendix B: "Soviet Economic Planning."

ects were state monopolies; there was no way to calculate the benefits they conveyed to Egypt, except insofar as Egypt was defined as the state, and the state was equated with the Pharaoh. This enormous transfer of productive wealth—human capital—from the market to the bureaucratic state benefited the pharaohs in the short run, but it made the Egyptian economy less productive and less rational economically. The value of the labor services of an individual Hebrew could easily be calculated on a free market. The value of the labor services of all Hebrews could not be calculated in the state's public works programs.

The Hebrews were forced to work rigorously. This was significant as *a means of oppression*; it was not significant as a testimony to the rationality of the Egyptian economy. By transferring their labor services to statist building projects, the Egyptian taskmasters reaffirmed the commitment of the state to its own deification at the expense of national per capita wealth. The state would collect its huge "tithe" on a permanent basis. Yet it could not guarantee that this "tithe" would be used efficiently. As the Egyptians learned in the year of the exodus, there had been far better uses for Israel's labor than the construction of treasure cities and coerced work in the fields. The state could, for a time, extract labor from the Hebrews; it was unable to escape the inevitable costs. It was also unable to escape the necessity of making accurate cost-benefit analyses, despite the fact that the phar-aohs believed that they had done so. The Hebrews worked rigorously, but at the time of the exodus, Egyptians learned how expensive this labor had been, and how wasteful the expenditure had been. The Pharaoh of the exodus was no longer able to enjoy his treasure cities; he was at the bottom of the Red Sea, and the treasures were gone.

A drowned Pharaoh, it should be noted, renders questionable the simultaneous belief in two possibilities: (1) the conventional dating of the powerful Eighteenth Dynasty in the fifteenth century (whose pharaohs' mummies still exist); and (2) the dating of the exodus in the fifteenth century. If you assume the former, you cannot easily hold to the latter. Yet virtually all Christian historians accept the fifteenthcentury dating of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Thus, with the exception of amateur historian Courville, they have wound up arguing for both positions simultaneously, or worse, arguing for a later date for the exodus. Such is the power of humanist scholarship in our day that well-meaning Christian scholars have surrendered themselves to the humanists.

Anyone who argues for a thirteenth-century date of the exodus has sold out the case for biblical inerrency by denying the truth of I Kings 6:1.[16] This is far more serious than making yourself look ridiculous by arguing for the doubtful proposition that the exodus really did take place in the fifteenth century, but somehow it left no trace—not even a hint of a minor regional dislocation—in the records of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and furthermore, that the Pharaoh's body was somehow retrieved from the sea, mummified, and buried honorably.

It is the initial assumption which must be rejected—the fifteenth-century dating of the early Eighteenth Dynasty—because I Kings 6:1 makes it impossible to date the exodus in any other century except the fifteenth. It was not some powerful early Eighteenth Dynasty Pharaoh, whose mummies have all survived, who died in the Red Sea. Some other Pharaoh, whose mummy did not survive, and who was a member of some other dynasty, was the Pharaoh of the exodus. The Eighteenth Dynasty is therefore improperly dated by conventional historians, Christian and non-Christian. This is why we should take seriously Courville's reconstructed chronology, at least as a preliminary step for a thorough reconsideration of the chronology of the ancient Near East.

Conclusion

The pharaohs, claiming omniscience, abandoned the free market for labor—a market that offers men at least some means of evaluating economic value. They claimed omnipotence, yet the Pharaoh of the exodus was totally vanquished. They extracted rigorous service from the Israelites, yet they had no way of knowing whether or not such service from the Israelites was a national benefit. They believed that slavery was a national benefit, yet one of them finally learned that it was a national disaster. *The arrogance of a sovereign central planning system was shattered in the year of the exodus*. What several pharaohs had believed was rigorous service to the Egyptian state turned out to be rigorous waste on a scale undreamed of by the Pharaoh who first enslaved Israel. It was Egypt, finally, which paid the price for this waste.

The modern version of the pharaohs' economy, socialist economic planning, also rests on an implicit assumption of near-omniscience of the central planning agencies. Like the pharaohs, socialist planners are "flying blind." They cannot accurately calculate true costs and

16. Gary North, *Disobedience and Defeat: An Economic Commentary on the Historical Books* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 17.

benefits because they do not have access to the information which is produced on a competitive free market. Centrally planned economies are wasteful, tyrannical, and ultimately self-destructive, just as the pharaohs' economy was. Socialist economic planning is an updated application of the religion of ancient Egypt.

4

ILLEGITIMATE STATE POWER

The king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools [birthstools]; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.

EXODUS 1:15–16

The theocentric principle here is the legitimacy of deceiving covenant-breaking tyrants when their actions threaten God's covenant people. Covenant-keepers are to use deception in the same way that God did. God later told Ezekiel:

> For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the Lord will answer him by myself: And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him (Ezek. 14:7–10).

A. Population Control

The goal of every imperial bureaucracy is control. No factor in the economy is supposed to be left to chance. This includes the pop-

ulation factor. Because human labor is one of the most basic of all economic inputs, a central planning agency which would leave population growth to "chance"—the natural fertility rate of the population's sexual partners—would be abdicating its responsibilities. The Hebrews were therefore an "unknown quantity" economically. *The very presence of their growing numbers in the face of deliberate oppression was a denial of the sovereignty of the Egyptian bureaucracy*.

There was also a religious issue at stake. Here was a significant portion of the total population of Egypt that was clearly out of favor with the ruler. The Pharaoh was in theory a divine figure; his protection was given to his subjects in the name of the gods. Egypt was extremely polytheistic. Yet one of the primary symbols of blessing, population growth, was present to a startling extent among this foreign, enslaved people. The literal fulfillment of God's covenantal promise to Abraham (Gen. 17:2–6) before the eyes of the Egyptians was a standing testimony to the sovereignty of a God other than the gods of Egypt, a universal God whose power was not limited to the original homeland of these displaced people. Here was a God who showed His presence among a defeated people, in stark contrast to the theory of pagan antiquity that gods are local in their sovereignty and are themselves defeated when their people are defeated by troops of another state. (See the disastrously erroneous but typical arguments of the king of Syria in this regard: I Kings 20:23–25.) *The fertility of the Hebrew slaves was a visible contradiction of the theology of the imperial bureaucracy*. The Egyptians were determined to call a halt to the extraordinary population growth of their newly enslaved Hebrew servants, and they were willing to resort to infanticide to achieve their ends.

The unprecedented population growth of the Hebrews served as a major threat to the sovereignty of the Pharaoh, who was the embodiment of the Egyptian state. They posed a potential military threat, since they might ally themselves to an invading foreign army (Ex. 1:9–10). They might succeed in displacing the Egyptians, since such population growth, if continued over several centuries, would fill up the land. Furthermore, the very presence of a growing population constituted an economic factor of great magnitude. How was such a factor to be incorporated into the state economic plan? How could they be controlled? How could the state supply them with basic necessities? How could the state be certain that their labor was being used in an efficient, productive fashion? How many imperial cities could the Pharaoh afford to build? How long would the resources

of Egypt be absorbed by the Hebrews in their status as public works employees? The Egyptians made them work rigorously (Ex. 1:14), but this could not guarantee that their efforts would be productive.

B. The Lying Midwives

In response to the Hebrews' multiplication, Pharaoh called in two Hebrew midwives. He ordered them to kill all male infants born to the slave women. Two women acting alone would not have been able to kill more than a fraction of the male children born on any day; therefore, many commentators have concluded that these two midwives were the leaders of a midwives' guild. As representatives of the guild, they would have been required by Pharaoh to pass along the order to the other midwives. The midwives refused to participate in these evil plans. They made a moral decision. They refused to obey the king. Then they lied to him about the reason for their supposed inability to obey: "And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere [before] the midwives come into them" (Ex. 1:19).

This passage has bothered far too many orthodox commentators. One person who could not accept the obvious—that God was pleased with their successful lie—was John Murray. His chapter on "The Sanctity of Truth" challenges their actions, just as it challenges Rahab's famous lie to the authorities of Jericho concerning the whereabouts of the Hebrew spies. "Let us grant, however, that the midwives did speak an untruth and that their reply was really false. There is still no warrant to conclude that the untruth is endorsed, far less that it is the untruth that is—in view when we read, 'And God dealt well with the midwives' (Exodus 1:20). The midwives feared God in disobeying the king and it is because they feared God that the Lord blessed them (cf. verses 17, 21). It is not at all strange that their fear of God should have coexisted with moral infirmity. The case is simply that no warrant for untruth can be elicited from this instance any more than in the cases of Jacob and Rahab."[1]

I have commented elsewhere at some length on the legitimacy of Jacob's lie to Isaac.[2] I have also commented on the legitimacy of Ra-

1. John Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1957), pp. 141–42.

2. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 27: "The Uses of Deception."

hab's lie to the Jericho authorities.[3] Many of the same arguments apply here. First, what else could the Hebrew midwives have done to save the lives of the children, except lie? Second, did Pharaoh deserve to be told the truth? Did the Nazis in World War II deserve to be told where Jews were being hidden? If those Dutchmen or Germans who hid Jews in their homes to protect them in World War II had been approached by the Nazis and asked if they had Jews hidden in their homes, knowing that all Christians are somehow morally bound to tell the truth at all times, no matter what, there would have been a lot of condemned Christians and captured Jews. Silence under such circumstances would have been regarded as an admission of guilt, and searches would have been conducted. Third, what is spying, other than a lie? (This is why the rules of Western warfare sanction the execution of spies during wartime, but men who are captured in foreign territory wearing their nation's uniform are supposed to be treated as prisoners of war.) Fourth, what is wartime camouflage, other than a lie?

This last question bothered Murray, a veteran of the First World War. When teaching a children's catechism class, he criticized the lie of Rebekah and Jacob to Isaac. Then he asked the class about camouflage. He denied that camouflage is a form of lying. It is only concealment, not deception, and concealment is legitimate under certain conditions. We are allowed to conceal something from someone "when that person has no right to know. . . ."[4] But that, of course, is the whole point. Did the authorities at Jericho have a "right to know," since they had been marked out by God for total destruction? Did Pharaoh have a "right to know," when he was seeking the destruction of God's people? So desperate was Murray to maintain his position of the universal immorality of lying that he speculated about the possibility that the midwives' tale really might have been the partial truth. "We need not suppose that the midwives' reply to Pharaoh was altogether void of truth. There is good reason to believe that the Hebrew women often bore their children without aid of the midwives. We may therefore have an instance of partial truth and not total untruth, and partial truth relevant to the circumstances."[5] But he did not tell us why "there is good reason to believe that the Hebrew women often bore their children without the aid of midwives." If this was the case

3. Gary North, "Appendix 5," in R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), pp. 838–42. Cf. Jim West, "Rahab's Justifiable Lie," *Christianity and Civilization*, 2 (1982–83).

4. John Murray: *A Memorial with Tributes* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975), p. 46.

5. Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, p. 141.

"often," then how did the midwives survive as a guild? This, in fact, is precisely the question Pharaoh should have asked them. He did not think to ask: "What have you midwives been doing all these years? Why is it that the Hebrew wives have only recently begun to deliver their babies so rapidly?" That he failed to ask them this question indicates that God had blinded him. That Prof. Murray also failed to ask this question indicates that his false presupposition blinded him.

The Pharaoh's decision was clearly *ad hoc* in nature. He immediately imposed a new policy of extermination: drowning, or at least abandonment (1:22). This new policy also obviously failed, since younger men participated in the exodus—Joshua and his generation—and someone in Moses' generation must have fathered them. The extermination policy was clearly an interim measure, and it was unsuccessful. Whether the original Pharaoh's intent was the ultimate extermination of the Hebrew slave population, or merely a short-run population control device, it failed.

Conclusion

The midwives lied directly to the Pharaoh. Given the preposterous nature of the tale, they lied baldly and shamelessly to him. The Bible is very clear concerning God's opinion of such outright lying: "Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses" (1:20–21).

By no bending of the Scriptures can legalistic commentators find the slightest trace of condemnation by God in the midwives' act of defiance against the constituted authority of Egypt. The state had spoken, and the midwives dealt with it in devious defiance. A biblical principle is hereby demonstrated. *The illegitimate laws of a civil government may be legitimately skirted when they come into direct conflict with a fundamental biblical principle*. This principle was announced clearly by Peter in Acts 5:29: "We ought to obey God rather than men."[6] In this case, the principle being upheld by the midwives was the morality of resisting the genocide of God's covenant people. Godly men must obey God, not the illegitimate demands of an apostate bureaucratic state.

Had the midwives been contemporary legalists, the infants would either have been slaughtered, or else the lying, "compromising" legal-

6. For a symposium on the question of the right of Christian resistance against tyranny, see *Christianity and Civilization*, 2 (Winter 1982–83). *op. cit.*

ists would have had guilty consciences and no new houses. But the midwives were neither legalists nor moralists. They honored God's law in preference to the state's law. In doing so, they acknowledged the *absolute sovereignty of God*, as well as *the limits that God places on the authority of the state*.

Addendum

A neglected document relating to the historicity of Shiphrah, or at least someone bearing this name, is provided by a papyrus that is held by the Brooklyn Museum. It is a document from the Thirteenth Dynasty. It lists 90 slaves, 30 of whom had Northwest Semitic names. Shiphrah was one of these names. The conventional dating of this document is about the eighteenth century B.C. However, according to Courville's reconstructed chronology, the Thirteenth Dynasty was the dynasty of the exodus. Though the attempted execution of the Hebrew males took place at least 80 years before the exodus, in the Twelfth Dynasty, Shiphrah could still have been alive in the new Pharaoh's household. At least, Shiphrah was a name that could have been used both in the era of the oppression and the exodus. This lends further support to Courville's chronological reconstruction.[7]

7. Donovan A. Courville, "A Biblical Reconstruction of Egypt's Early Chronology," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, II (Summer 1975), p. 152. On the papyrus, see Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), pp. 93–94; John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1972), pp. 49–50.

5

ENVY, RUMOR, AND BONDAGE

And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

EXODUS 2:11–14

The theocentric principle here is the authority of God's agent of protection to intervene in order to protect the defenseless. Moses was God's agent of protection four decades before he returned from the wilderness to lead the Israelites out of bondage.

This passage raises several difficult points of interpretation. First, was Moses a murderer? Second, why was he resented by the Hebrew who had initiated the wrong? Third, what was the motivating force behind the rumor? Fourth, what were the results when this rumor became widespread?

A. Was Moses a Murderer?

Was Moses a murderer? Biblically, a murderer is a person who fatally wounds another individual, but who has not received the sanction of legitimate civil or divine law for carrying out the violent act. "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13)[1] refers to the autonomous act of one indi-

1. Chapter 26.

vidual against another. It does not refer to capital punishment by the civil government, since the law of God singles out crimes that must be punished by execution (cf. Ex. 22:18–20).[2] Also, self-defense is a legitimate excuse; a biblical case law authorizes the slaying of a thief if he breaks in at night, when his intentions—theft, violence, or murder—cannot be readily known (Ex. 22:2–3). By implication, we can legitimately slay a life-threatening (or potentially life-threatening) attacker in defense of an innocent third party, just as Moses did. An unsanctioned slaying constitutes murder. A man takes the law into his own hands; it has not been placed there by God or society. Murder is an act of self-proclaimed autonomous man against another man, created in God's image, who is entitled to protection by the law of God.

Moses was not sanctioned by Egyptian law to execute the Egyptian taskmaster. But this man had no biblically legitimate authority over the defenseless Hebrews. Their land had been stolen, and they had all been kidnapped—a capital offense (Ex. 21:16).[3] He deserved death, as did all the taskmasters in Egypt. The New Testament affirms that Moses was a faithful man in the decision to stand with his fellow Hebrews and then in his flight from Egypt (Heb. 11:24–27).

Why did he do it? In part, because he made a miscalculation concerning the hearts of his brethren. Stephen testified to his executioners: "And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian. For he supposed his brethren would have understood now that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not" (Acts 7:24–25). The Pharaoh sought to kill Moses, despite Moses' position in the Pharaoh's family, when he learned of Moses' act (Ex. 2:15).[4]

Moses was clearly the most highly placed Hebrew of his day. No other Hebrew resided in the king's household. No other Hebrew had access to the highest authorities in the land. No other Hebrew had grown up under the instruction of Egyptian tutors, possibly even to serve as a ruler in the state. If Moses' act was not murder, then we have to view him as a judge of Israel comparable to Samson, Debo-

2. Chapters 35, 36.

3. Chapter 34.

4. Donovan Courville speculated that the daughter of Pharaoh was Sebek-nefrure, the daughter of Amenemhet III, and the last of the kings of Dynasty XII. He also speculated that she married Kha-nefer-re, the twenty-fourth king on the Turin papyrus. There is a legend that Chenephres (Greek transliteration) was the foster father of Moses, but prior to Courville's chronological reconstruction, it was not believed possible, given this king's placement on the Turin papyrus. Courville, The *Exodus Problem and its Ramifications*, 2 vols. (Loma Linda, California: Challenge Books, 1971), I, pp. 155–57.

rah, Ehud, and other judges who defended Israel from conquering enemies.

Israel was a captive people. The Hebrews had been unlawfully thrown into slavery. The covenant between the Egyptian state of Joseph's day and the Hebrews had been broken by Egypt. They had become captives in a foreign land. Moses, who was used to the trappings of authority, witnessed a criminal act by an Egyptian against a Hebrew brother. Moses took action, thinking there were no witnesses. He brought judgment against a representative of the Pharaoh, who had enslaved the Hebrews illegitimately. He acted as a judge of Israel.

Immediately, the rumor spread. The man who had been defended by Moses must have spread the word. When Moses confronted two striving Hebrews, the guilty initiator of violence resisted Moses' intervention into the case. He challenged Moses' right to rule by threatening him. He reminded Moses of his own act, and by implication he threatened Moses with death, since the Egyptian authorities were ready to execute any slave who killed an Egyptian. Moses instantly recognized the threat, and he fled Egypt.

The guilty man who had been challenged by Moses did not want judgment by another Hebrew. He preferred to act immorally against a Hebrew brother, striking him, if necessary, while remaining in bondage to the Egyptian state. He was ready to call the wrath of the Egyptians down upon Moses, who represented Israel's best hope and highest placed representative. He wanted to remain free to commit violence against another Hebrew, even if this freedom to act immorally would continue to cost him his opportunity to live as a free man. He preferred bondage under Egypt rather than the rule of biblical law. *He preferred slavery under pagan law to freedom under biblical law*. This was to be the continuing theme for many years: biblical law vs. slavish Israelites.

The speed with which the rumor spread astonished Moses, and he knew that it would be hopeless to call its further transmission to a halt. In only one day, the story had spread to one of the combatants, and possibly to both of them. Moses recognized his vulnerability. He was highly placed. He was not a slave. He was a Hebrew, yet he did not share the trials and tribulations of the Hebrews. If he could remain in his station as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, he could escape the rigorous service that was the expected fate of the other Israelites. But he had already decided to cast his lot with the Israelites (Heb. 11:24), and so, as the rumor spread, he knew that he

would be brought down, possibly even executed. The rumor spread, which is to say that people actively spread the rumor.

B. The Envy Factor

What could have been their motivation? If Moses was brought low, what possible benefit could this have brought the Israelites? Was it not a benefit to have a Hebrew in the house of the Pharaoh? It certainly was beneficial centuries later, when Esther was the wife of the Persian king. In fact, her high position saved the lives of her fellow Hebrews. Would it not have been a wise policy for every hearer of the rumor to caution the tale-bearer against spreading it further? Would not such gossip threaten the one person in high places who might mitigate the burdens of their slavery? And if Moses tumbled from power, what Hebrew had anything to gain from his loss of influence and wealth?

The answer should be obvious: *no Hebrew would have been helped by Moses' fall*. Yet the rumor spread like wildfire, forcing him to flee. Someone must have told an Egyptian, who carried the story to Pharaoh. The joy of acting as a tale-bearer was too intense.[5] It was not covetousness that motivated them; it was envy. It was not the expectation of increased personal wealth as a result of Moses' fall, but rather an intense excitement from contemplating Moses' loss as such. It was Moses' very position that grated on the Israelites. It was his ability to escape their daily lifestyle that angered them. *It was the sheer joy of seeing Moses brought low that helped to fan the flames of resentment and spread the rumor*.

Helmut Schoeck's study of envy brings out the tremendous social consequences of this universal sin. It is the root of socialism, he argued. We cannot understand socialism as strictly the product of covetousness (which Schoeck called 'jealousy'), that is, the desire of one group of voters to legislate for themselves a portion of another group's assets. These voting patterns are also maintained by envy: the desire to destroy those who are perceived to be better off, better looking, more privileged, or whatever. Wrote Schoeck:

> It is anguish to perceive the prosperity and advantages of others. Envy is emphatically an act of perception. As we shall see, there are no objective criteria for what it is that stimulates envy. And herein lies the error of po-

5. On the sociology of secrecy, see *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. Kurt H. Wolff (New York: Free Press, 1950), Pt. 4: "The Secret and the Secret Society." Simmel was an early twentieth-century sociologist.

> litical egalitarians who believe that it is only necessary to eliminate once and for all certain inequalities from this world to produce a harmonious society of equals devoid of envy. Anyone who has a propensity for envy, who is driven by that emotion, will always manage to find enviable qualities or possessions in others to arouse envy. . . . One begrudges others their personal or material assets, being as a rule almost more intent on their destruction than on their acquisition. The professional thief is less tormented, less motivated by envy, than is the arsonist. Beneath the envious man's primarily destructive desire is the realization that in the long run it would be a very demanding responsibility were he to have the envied man's qualities or possessions, and that the best kind of world would be one in which neither he, the subject, nor the object of his envy would have them. For instance, an envy-oriented politician regards a lower national income *per capita* as more tolerable than one that is higher for all and includes a number of wealthy men.[6]

The Hebrews of Moses' day were envious, more arsonists than thieves, more hostile to his outward success than desirous of personally replacing him in his position of authority. *They were fleeing res-ponsibility*, and they did not want to be judged by a man who would force them to adhere to God's specially revealed law, to stand up against their unlawful captors, and to take risks associated with full personal responsibility. They preferred to remain slaves and to delight in gossip against their perceived superiors.

Another point stressed by Schoeck is that envy is primarily a product of *social proximity*. The closer someone is to the successful person—not geographically, but socially—the more likely it is that envy will spring up. "Envy plays a negligible part where it is a question of restraining a prince, a head of state or a tycoon from absurd expenditure, but it plays an important part when one among almost equals has got out of step."[7] This was Moses' problem. He was socially and racially a Hebrew, but he had escaped the burdens of his people. The envy of the Hebrews was not directed against the Pharaoh or his vizier; it was directed against a Hebrew who was enjoying the external comforts of Pharaoh's household. The Pharaoh was seemingly beyond a downfall; he was the incarnate god, the state walking on earth. Moses, on the other hand, was uniquely vulnerable: a Hebrew in an Egyptian court, a judge who had executed an Egyptian, and a member of an enslaved race.

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6. Helmut Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behavior* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, [1966] 1970), p. 19. This has been reprinted by Liberty Press, Indianapolis.
7. *Ibid*., p. 349.

The slaves viewed Pharaoh as a legitimate monarch, although by God's standards, he had broken a covenant between Egypt and Israel. Moses was not seen as being a legitimate judge. "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" taunted the Hebrew offender.

Wasn't Moses trying to elevate himself over his own people? How dare he? He could be cut down to size! The Pharaoh had unassailable power; Moses had completely assailable power. Moses was envied; the Pharaoh was not. Social proximity was a threat to Moses. As a rich man among envious people, he was too close for comfort. He fled.

Modern democratic societies are especially threatened by envy, just as slaves within a slave society are. The similarity is this: men are officially alike within a democratic social order; so are slaves in a slave society. The official social proximity of the members of a democratic society makes envy far more likely than in a caste society or traditional or feudal society, with their supposedly innate class or status hierarchies. What is resented is not luxury as such, but relative luxury on the part of people who are regarded by the envious as being essentially on a par with them.[8] This is why it is futile and even dangerous to pursue political programs of coercive wealth redistribution in an age of envy. The closer society comes to the egalitarian goal, the more envious that men will become.

Moses seemed to be "lording it over" the Hebrews. He was a lord, as the adopted son of the daughter of Pharaoh, but socially (racially) he was a Hebrew. He was close to them racially, and therefore he was vulnerable. He could be brought low—back down to the level of his fellow Hebrews—by the information they possessed. Even if it might mean his life, they were willing to spread the tale.

Moses was not a murderer; he was a judge. Yet he was forced by the murderous envy of the Hebrews to seek safety in a strange land, where he married (Ex. 2:21). He was not accepted as a judge by the Hebrews of his generation. He was like Joseph, whose envious brothers sold him into slavery. He, too, went to a strange land, and he also married the daughter of a foreign priest (Gen. 41:45). In both instances, the key role God gave to each—the delivery of his kinsman from a crisis—could be achieved only by *geographical separation and social separation*. Moses would return from Midian as an 80-year-old man whose old enemy, the Pharaoh, had died (Ex. 2:23). He had been forgotten by his brethren, who still groaned for deliverance. For a full generation,

8. *Ibid*., p. 220.

the Hebrews remained in bondage, while the one who might have delivered them, had it not been for their intense envy, lived in the wilderness. They paid dearly for their envy. And later, when they refused to forsake envy after the exodus, they paid with another 40 years of sufferings.[9]

C. Envy vs. Economic Growth

Another aspect of envy is its inhibiting effect on social and economic advance. The successful man who struggles to raise himself above the common denominator faces envy because of his success. Because those around him are socially close to him, every sign of success raises the threat of envy. It then becomes imperative to conceal the extent of one's success, to keep others from discovering one's plans for the future.[10] Those who would advance themselves will resort to deception. (The other alternative: moving away. This removes success symbols and successful role models and skills from the community.) Shared social goals in such circumstances must be of a sort that do not involve the kind of economic or social change that might elevate one man or a few families above the average. But elites induce economic change by testing new processes and new products. Only later, when the success of the venture has been proven, will capital be made available widely to finance an extension of its benefits to the masses. *Inequality is basic to human progress*. Elites always are important in the development of new ideas, new products, and new technologies. The question is this: On what basis will the elites gain access to capital? By political power? By an ecclesiastical monopoly? Or by productivity that is valued by customers, as demonstrated on the free market? We cannot escape the process of innovation by elites. *The key area of innovation is knowledge*. Hayek commented:

> The growth of knowledge is of such special importance because, while the material resources will always remain scarce and will have to be reserved for limited purposes, the uses of new knowledge (where we do not make them artificially scarce by patents of monopoly) are unrestricted. Knowledge, once achieved, becomes gratuitously available for the benefit of all. It is through this free gift of the knowledge acquired by the experiments of some members of society that general progress is made possible, that the achievements of those who have gone before facilitate the advance of those who follow. At any stage of this process there will always be many

9. On envy in the wilderness, see Numbers 12 and 16.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

> things we already know how to produce but which are still too expensive to provide for more than a few. . . . If we, in the wealthier countries, today can provide facilities and conveniences for most which not long ago would have been physically impossible to produce in such quantities, this is in large measure the direct consequence of the fact that they were first made for a few. A large part of the expenditure of the rich, though not intended for that end, thus serves to defray the cost of the experimentation with the new things that, as a result, can later be available for the poor. . . . The path of advance is greatly eased by the fact that it has been trodden before. It is because scouts have found the goal that the road can be built for the less lucky or less energetic. What today may seem extravagance or even waste, because it is enjoyed by the few and even undreamed of by the masses, is payment for the experimentation with a style of living that will eventually be made available to the many. The range of what will be tried and later developed, the fund of experience that will become available to all, is greatly extended by the unequal distribution of present benefits; and the rate of advance will be greatly increased if the first steps are taken long before the majority can profit from them. Many of the improvements would indeed never become a possibility for all if they had not long before been available to some. If all had to wait for better things until they could be provided for all, that day would in many instances never come. Even the poorest today owe their relative material well-being to the results of past inequality.[11]

Compulsory, state-enforced programs of wealth redistribution are inimical to the social and economic progress of civilization. So is envy. *Envy leads to a present-oriented society*. This is a lower-class society, in Edward Banfield's definition.[12] Why should this present-orientation be the product of envy? Schoeck elaborated:

> The future, the only field where the fruits of any development are to be reaped, lends itself to a co-operative approach, to exploitation by men able to exchange and co-ordinate their ideas, knowledge and desires. But this is conceivable only when fear of the other's envy, of his possible sabotage or

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11. F. A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty, new ed.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 43–44. Chapter 6 of Hayek's book, "The Common Sense of Progress," is invaluable.

12. Edward Banfield, *The Unheavenly City Revisited* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), pp. 53–54, 61–62. In the original book, *The Unheavenly City* (Little Brown, 1970), he included a more hard-hitting analysis of the lower-class, present-oriented individual: pp. 217–23. Wrote Banfield in *Revisited*: "The implication that lower-class culture is pathological seems fully warranted both because of the relatively high incidence of mental illness in the lower class and also because human nature seems loathe to accept a style of life that is so radically present-oriented" (p. 63). He was incorrect on one point: it is not "human nature" as such which is loathe to accept present-oriented, lower-class culture. It is Christianity which finds it loathsome.

> malicious sorcery, has to some extent been overcome. No one can even begin to have rational aspirations for the future unless he has a realistic view of what the future may be; but no such prognosis can be made so long as each member of the group carefully keeps hidden his view of the future. Nor can a view that is conducive to social and economic development be formed within a group until its individual members are able, in frank discussion, to compare, weigh and synchronize all their different pictures of the future. It is precisely this, however, which more than anything else is impeded by the ever-present fear that basically everyone, more especially our near neighbour, is potentially envious and that the best defence against him is to pretend complete indifference about the future.[13]

D. Envy vs. Deliverance

This analysis throws light on Moses' experience. How could he serve as a leader of his people, given their entrenched envy? How could he conspire with them to co-ordinate their efforts? He knew within 24 hours of his execution of the Egyptian that his position as a judge of Israel had been rejected by the Israelites. The best approach was immediate flight. He would wash his hands of them. God refused to allow him to wash his hands of them. For decades, he was able to concentrate on his own affairs, independent of his brethren, developing his talents as a shepherd—skills that he would subsequently put to use during the final 40 years of his lifetime—but at last God called to him out of the burning bush. Moses resisted, but eventually he went back to Egypt. This time, he came as a stranger. This time, he came as an independent outsider from another land. This time, he was not easily envied, since few Hebrews could look upon him as a social equal who had somehow been elevated to a position of vulnerable authority. This time, he came with signs and wonders to demonstrate his position as a judge, one who came in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This time, he would confront the Pharaoh directly, not intervene secretly to eliminate one Egyptian persecutor. This time, he would not be in a position to be ruined by the envy-motivated gossip of a slave population. This time, a God-inspired future-orientation would motivate him, and the Hebrew slaves followed out of awe, fear, and hope. This time, he came as God's acknowledged agent, not as a social equal. This time, his continual victories over Pharaoh would demonstrate just who it was who had raised him up. This time, it was Pharaoh, not a Hebrew slave, who would ask him who he thought he was. No Hebrew in Egypt would

13. Schoeck, *Envy*, p. 46.

again taunt him with the words, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" This time, they knew. This time, most important of all, they went free.

Conclusion

Moses was the victim of envy when the Hebrews of his youth refused to subordinate themselves to his rule. They spread the rumor of his execution of the Egyptian. He fled into the wilderness for 40 years, leaving his brethren in slavery for an additional 40 years. Gossip placed a whole generation in needless bondage. Bondage was God's judgment on them.

The sin of envy strikes the sinner. It restricts his ability to cooperate with his fellow man. It rankles in his heart and can lead to slower or even zero economic growth. In the case of the Israelites, it led to an additional 40 years of bondage. The Hebrews preferred to live in bondage to a socially distant, cruel, self-proclaimed divine monarch rather than subordinate themselves under a man of their own covenant. They preferred to be slaves than to be under God's representative, Moses. They preferred the delights of rumor-spreading to the delights and responsibilities of freedom. They preferred to tear down Moses from his pedestal rather than elevate themselves, under Moses' leadership, to freedom. They received what they wanted: another generation of servitude.

6

CUMULATIVE TRANSGRESSION AND RESTITUTION

And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

EXODUS 3:21–22

The theocentric principle here is restitution, which God requires of all transgressors against Him and His people

God's promise to Moses was explicitly and completely fulfilled at the time of the exodus. Plague after plague had come upon the Egyptians. They could stand no more after the final plague, the death of the firstborn child of every house. "And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men" (Ex. 12:33).

In order to speed the Hebrews along their way out of the land, the Egyptians gave them what they requested: spoils. God's promise to Moses had not been a mere prophecy; it had been a command. "And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment" (Ex. 12:35). The Hebrew verb translated as "borrow" is the normal, everyday Hebrew word for "ask."[1] This was a form of tribute, like military spoils. The Israelites incurred no debt to repay. Both the Egyptians and the Israelites understood this.

The language of the Bible is peculiar here. First, the Israelites were

1. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus, trans. Israel Abrahams* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, [1951] 1974), p. 44.

told that they would find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. This is an odd use of the word "favor." It did not signify love on the part of the Egyptians. Their favor was the product of extreme fear. They feared the Israelites, for the God of these slaves was too powerful and dangerous. The Egyptians were not converted to this God; they did not choose to worship Him. They chose instead to remove His people from their midst, to put the fearful arm of God into a different nation. They hoped to escape the earthly wrath of God by encouraging the Israelites to leave as rapidly as possible, even though the Israelites possessed the "borrowed" wealth. Pharaoh did not even wait until morning to call Moses and Aaron before him (Ex. 12:31). The favor of the Egyptians was a fear-induced favor.

The second peculiarity of language is the use of the word translated by the King James translators as "borrow." It clearly means "ask," but here it implies "to extract under threat of violence." It meant *tribute*—in this case, tribute to a departing army rather than to an invading one. The Israelites had not tried to invade Egypt militarily, but the Egyptians had created a hostile nation within the boundaries of Egypt by having placed the Israelites in bondage.

A. Slavery

It is not clear just how long the Israelites had been in bondage. By the year of the exodus, they had been slaves for at least 80 years, since Moses was born during the reign of the Pharaoh of the infanticide edict, and he led the nation out of Egypt when he was 80 (Ex. 7:7; he died at age 120 [Deut. 34:7], and Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness [Num. 14:33–34]). Courville's reconstruction indicates that the daughter of Pharaoh who brought up Moses was the daughter of Amenemhet III, who succeeded Sesostris III.[2] Sesostris III, concluded Courville, was the Pharaoh who first enslaved the Israelites.[3] Therefore, the Israelites were in actual bondage for perhaps a century, possibly one or two decades longer. I believe they were in bondage for 80 years: two 40-year periods. It would depend on the point of time in the reign of Sesostris III that he placed the Israelites in bondage. If Courville's reconstruction is incorrect, or if he has not accurately identified the proper kings of Egypt, then all we can say in confidence is that the enslavement was at least 80 years. This

2. Donovan Courville, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, 2 vols. (Loma Linda, California: Challenge Books, 1971), I, p. 157.

3. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 147–48.

conclusion rests on the additional assumption that the Pharaoh of the enslavement was the same as the Pharaoh of the infanticide edict, that the edict was made at the same time as the enslavement, and that Moses was born in that year. Because none of these correlations is mandatory, it is possible that the enslavement was longer than 80 years.

Slavery is a valid form of economic activity, according to the Bible, but only under very specific limitations. The maximum term of a brother's service for defaulting on a zero-interest charitable loan is six years (Deut. 15:12). Even if a Hebrew were to sell himself to a foreigner, he retained the right of redemption, as did his relatives (Lev. 25:47–55).[4] No Hebrew could be enslaved under any circumstances for more than 49 years, for all of them belonged to God (Lev. 25:54–55). *The only perpetual slaves were those of the conquered tribes of Canaan*, and only after Israel had taken possession of her land, plus any slaves purchased from caravaners (Lev. 25:44–46).[5] The Hebrews had been given the land of Goshen, for Joseph had saved the lives of all Egyptians (Gen. 47:11). The Egyptians had stolen Israel's freedom. They had executed Hebrew children (Ex. 1). They had stolen generations of Hebrew labor. They had asserted illegitimate sovereignty over God's people. They had not set them free in the seventh year. In 1491 B.C., the bills came due.

B. Restitution

If Israel could be punished by God for ignoring His laws regulating slavery, it is not surprising that Egypt should be forced to offer restitution. The years in Egypt were to serve as a reminder to Israel of the horrors and injustice of unregulated slavery: the terrors of being a stranger. The experience was supposed to move them to justice (Ex. 22:21;[6] 23:9;[7] Deut. 10:17–19; 15:15). Jeremiah spared no words when Israel violated the laws regulating slavery. He promised them the sword, the pestilence, and the famine; he promised them captivity (Jer. 34:8–17).[8] His words were fulfilled. The Israelites did not take the preferred form of escape.

4. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press [1994] 2012), ch. 31.

5. *Ibid*., ch. 30.

6. Chapter 36.

7. Chapter 54.

8. Gary North, *Restoration and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on the Prophets* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 18.

Neither did the Egyptians. They had sinned for several generations. God had spared their fathers, but in Moses' day, God extracted restitution from the sons. He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon later generations of those who hate Him (Ex. 20:5).[9] Not that the sons are punished for their fathers' sins (Deut. 24:16); every man is to be put to death for his own sin. But the iniquities of fathers in a society tend to be the iniquities of the sons. There is historical continuity in life. Some of the fathers and grandfathers had escaped external, cultural judgment, and their sons continued in the same sin. But there came a time when the restitution came due. All the sabbatical years of release that had been ignored, and all the capital goods that had been required for them to give to the released slaves (Deut. 15:14),[10] had to be paid, plus a penalty for theft (Lev. 6:5), by that final generation. They themselves went into bondage to the invading Amalekites (Hyksos, called the shepherd kings by conventional historians) for at least a century.[11] The glory of Egypt was removed.

If the sons are not to be punished for the sins of their fathers, why should the Egyptian generation in the year of the exodus have been required to bear such a heavy economic burden? The explanation that is most consistent with biblical law is the argument from the concept of familistic capital. The heirs of earlier generations of enslaving Egyptians had become the beneficiaries of the labor of earlier generations of Hebrews. The fathers and grandfathers had extracted labor from the Hebrews at below-market prices. Had below-market pricing not been in effect, they could have hired the Hebrews to construct the cities. However, *they wanted something for nothing*: rigorous labor without competitive wage rates. They had sunk their capital into monuments for the Egyptian state. They had escaped the taxation levels that would have been necessary to hire the services of the Hebrews, had there been a free market for labor services. Their heirs had become the beneficiaries of all the capital that had been retained within the families—capital that would have gone to the Pharaoh in the form of additional taxes to finance his self-glorifying public works projects.

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9. Chapter 22.

10. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press [1999] 2012), ch. 37.

11. Siegfried Schwantes, *A Short History of the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1965), p. 76. Other historians believe that the period of the Hyksos may have been two centuries. Courville believed that the Hyksos period was over four centuries: from the exodus to Solomon. Courville, *Exodus Problem*, I, pp. 124–25.

Furthermore, we can conclude that such capital could have been invested in growth-producing activities. We have no idea what the compound rate of economic growth was in that era, but some growth in capital was possible. Therefore, the sons who saw their riches "borrowed" by the Hebrews were simply *returning the compounded capital that they and their ancestors had coercively extracted from the Hebrews*. The Hebrews had been forced to pay homage, in the form of taxes in kind (labor services, forfeited freedom), to the Egyptian state. Now the heirs of Joseph were collecting on past accounts that had finally come due. They were collecting capital that lawfully belonged to them. *The Egyptians were simply paying restitution*. God had pros-pered the pharaohs by giving one of them a monopoly over the grain supplies in an era of famine. God's representative, Joseph, had provided the necessary agricultural forecast and the efficient administration of the program.[12] Then the heirs of the Pharaoh enslaved the Hebrews, who had been promised the land of Goshen as a permanent reward (Gen. 45:8–10; 47:6). *The state, in the person of Pharaoh, had broken its covenant with Israel*. That covenant was a civil covenant with God, since it had been established with His people. God, in the day of the exodus, collected His lawful tribute. They had broken their treaty with His people, and as the Hebrews' lawful sovereign, He intervened to bring judgment upon the Egyptians.

There is no escape from the laws of God, either individually or socially. God held the Egyptians fully responsible for upholding their covenant with the Hebrews. The Egyptians had profited from Joseph's warning. They had also profited from the labor provided by generations of Hebrews. They were held fully responsible for decisions made by the pharaohs. They paid for their sins, and because of the additional capital possessed by the Egyptians of the exodus period—as a direct result of the reduced taxes paid by their ancestors—they also paid for the sins of their fathers. After all, the Egyptians of the exodus period were the beneficiaries of the sins of their fathers. They had been bound by the terms of their fathers' promise to Israel that the land of Goshen would belong to Israel, and they had broken this covenant.

The Egyptians paid more than jewels to the Hebrews. They paid their firstborn. God had told Moses that this would be the price extracted from them if they did not repent through their representative,

12. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 33.

the Pharaoh: "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn" (Ex. 4:22–23). The Egyptians had enslaved God's firstborn. They had, in effect, *kidnapped* them. The penalty for kidnapping is death (Ex. 21:16).[13] By refusing to allow the Israelites to go and sacrifice to their God, the Pharaoh was admitting that he was guilty of kidnapping, for he was stating clearly that the people of Israel were his, when in fact they belonged to God. When the Egyptians made restitution, it was expensive beyond their wildest imaginations. The heirs (firstborn) of the slave-owners were slain.

C. Tribute

The Pharaoh, as a self-proclaimed divinity, was viewed as the only incarnate representative on earth of the Egyptian gods. It was the king who brought the crucially important annual flood of the Nile. Frankfort commented on this: "Even as late an author as Ammianus Marcellus [late 4th century, A.D.—G.N.] knew that the Egyptians ascribed plenty or famine to the quality of their king—not, in a modern sense, to his quality as an administrator, but to his effectiveness as an organ of integration, partaking of the divine and of the human and entrusted with making the mutual dependence of the two a source of 'laughter and wonder.'"[14] It was the king who, as a divine being, brought *moral order* to the whole world. Thus, when the Pharaoh of the famine established policies that assured Egypt's survival during seven years of famine, thereby reestablishing his ownership of all Egypt, his followers could interpret his acts as inspired. The Pharaoh could be understood as having reemphasized his own divinity, and the power of the Egyptian gods, before his people.

By enslaving the Hebrews, the later Pharaoh was elevating the gods of Egypt above the God of Joseph. The ancient world interpreted a military victory by one nation or city-state as the victory of its gods over the gods of the defeated people. Thus, by enslaving the Hebrews, the Pharaoh was announcing the sovereignty of Egypt's gods over Joseph's God. By bringing Egypt to its knees at the time of the exodus, God was ritually announcing His sovereignty in the most

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13. Chapter 34.

14. Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near East Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1948] 1962), p. 58.

graphic way possible. The Egyptians had lost their prosperity, their children, and now their jewelry. The gods of Egypt had been brought low. Only the outright destruction of Egypt's army, followed by an invasion and conquest by foreigners, could have made the picture any more graphic, and these events were shortly to follow. The Pharaoh-god would perish with his army.

The gods of Egypt paid tribute to the God of Israel. This tribute was paid by the representative of Egypt's gods, Pharaoh, as well as his subordinates, the nobles and wealthy people who had amassed great capital. It was paid to servants who represented the God of Israel. The humiliation in such a transaction is easily understood.

D. The Slave Wife

The exodus can be seen from another perspective, that of a man who rejects his slave-wife. Exodus 11:1 has been translated in the King James Version as follows: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether." An alternative reading throws more light on the concluding clause: ". . . after that he will let you go hence; as one letteth go a slave-wife shall he surely expel you hence."[15] Exodus 21 begins the detailed presentation of the laws of God, immediately after the presentation of the ten commandments, or general principles of God's law. What is significant about Exodus 21 is that *it begins with the laws applying to slavery, the social and economic condition from which God has just freed His people*. It was a topic which was eminently familiar to them.

Exodus 21:7–11 provides the laws dealing with the slave wife.[16] If a man sold his daughter to be the wife of a master, with the purchase price going to the father rather than to the wife as her dowry, then she needed protection. The dowry was permanently forfeited by the husband if he unlawfully divorced her, or did not deal with her as a lawful wife. Rushdoony commented on the function of the dowry: "The dowry was an important part of marriage. We meet it first in Jacob, who worked seven years for Laban to earn a dowry for Rachel (Gen. 29:18). The pay for this service belonged to the bride as her

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15. David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), p. 56. He relied heavily on the work of Reuven Yaron's article in the *Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquite*, 3rd Series, Vol. IV (1957), pp. 122ff.

16. Chapter 32.

dowry, and Rachel and Leah could indignantly speak of themselves as having been 'sold' by their father, because he had withheld from them their dowry (Gen. 31:14, 15). It was the family capital; it represented the wife's security, in case of divorce where the husband was at fault."[17]

The girl who was sold to a master did not personally possess a dowry; it belonged to her father. She had the legal status of a concubine: a wife without a dowry. Biblical law nevertheless protected her. If the master decided not to marry her after all, he was required to allow her to be redeemed (bought back); he could not sell her into a foreign nation, "seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her" (Ex. 21:8).[18] "And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three things unto her, then she shall go out free without money" (Ex. 21:9–11). In other words, her family, which had received payment for her, owed the master nothing under such circumstances. She did not have to be bought back.

Israel had not been treated justly in Egypt. Her Egyptian "husband" had not dealt with her as a lawful wife. She deserved her freedom, but the Egyptians had refused to let her go. Furthermore, Israel had never been a slave-wife. Joseph had increased Egypt's wealth, and *Pharaoh had granted Israel the land of Goshen*. The value of that good land, the best in Egypt (Gen. 47:11), had been transferred to Israel. *This was Israel's dowry*. Now Israel was being cast out, as if she were a slave-wife. A real wife is entitled to her dowry. Instead of a mortgage on the land of Goshen, which the Egyptians should have paid to Israel, the Israelites took the jewels (female adornment) of the Egyptians. *Egypt could not legitimately treat Israel as a slave wife, sending her out without her lawful dowry*. The verse following God's revelation that Pharaoh would expel Israel as a slave-wife reads: "Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold" (Ex. 11:2).

Conclusion

Egypt could not escape the principle of restitution. Restitution extends to the cross. God required payment by His Son, Jesus Christ,

17. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), pp. 176–77.

18. Chapter 32.

to atone for the sins of mankind, both collectively (common grace) and individually.[19] This transaction should also be understood as the payment of a dowry, thereby making the church, Christ's bride, a lawful wife, not just a concubine. Egypt made restitution. Egypt offered her sacrifice, the firstborn, to God, since no Egyptian was willing to make restitution by the shedding of a lamb's blood, "for there was not a house where there was not one dead" (Ex. 12:30b). God required restitution for the years of servitude beyond the maximum permitted, six. In fact, Egypt even owed Israel for the first six years, since the six-year slave contract was a debt-slavery contract, and Israel had not been in debt to Egypt. Egypt had acted as though Israel had been a lawful captive in wartime, or a debtor to Egypt. Israel was neither. Furthermore, Egypt owed restitution for having kidnapped Israel. Egypt owed Israel for having treated Israel as less than a full wife, trying to expel her without returning her dowry, as though she had been a slave-wife. Egypt paid dearly for these acts of long-term lawlessness.

The cost of the pharaohs' brick pyramids and brick treasure cities turned out to be far higher than any Egyptian, especially the various pharaohs, had dared to calculate. Any intuitive cost-benefit analysis in the mind of a pharaoh—so many benefits, in time and eternity, from a new pyramid or city versus so many expenditures in feeding and controlling the Hebrew slaves—turned out to be catastrophically erroneous. The pharaohs drastically overestimated the benefits of their construction projects, and they underestimated the real costs of enslaving the Hebrews.[20] The pharaohs had abandoned their most important pair of guidelines for making accurate cost-benefit analyses, namely, the *free market*, which establishes prices through competitive bidding, and the *law of God*, which establishes God's justice. All the pharaohs, from the enslaving Pharaoh to the Pharaoh of the exodus, ignored the principle of restitution in their dealings with the Israelites. When the final bills came due, ancient Egypt collapsed.

19. Gary North, "Common Grace, Eschatology, and Biblical Law," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, III (Winter 1976–77). Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987).

20. Chapter 3.

7

THE OPTIMUM PRODUCTION MIX

And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.

EXODUS 5:5–7

The theocentric issue here is God's three omnis: omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. He is not affected by scarcity. The creation is limited. God is not. To maximize output, men need a plan to coordinate the factors of production, including other men. God has a plan: subjective and objective. His plan is the basis of all human plans. He imputes meaning and order to the creation.

A. The Confrontation Begins

God witnessed the oppression of His people by the Egyptians for at least 80 years (Ex. 3:9). He sent Moses and Aaron before the Pharaoh. God did not instruct Moses to ask for an immediate and permanent release of His people from bondage; Moses was only to request a time of religious sacrifice for them (Ex. 3:18; 5:1). However, given the theology of Egypt, this would have to be regarded by the Pharaoh as blasphemy.

The Pharaoh was believed to be the sole divine-human link, the god Horus walking on earth, who would become Osiris at his death, and who was also the descendant of Re, the sun god. Frankfort has summarized this doctrine of divine kingship: "Egyptian kingship emerged at the end of the predynastic period. Of this the Egyptians were well aware; they recognized a first king of the first dynasty,

Menes. Tradition named as his predecessors the 'semi-divine spirits' who had succeeded rule by the gods. These in their turn had been preceded by the Creator, Re. Monarchical rule, then, was coeval with the universe; the Creator had assumed kingship over his creation from the first."[1]

Moses' request to allow the Israelites to sacrifice to a foreign God was an affront to this Pharaoh. This Thirteenth Dynasty king[2]—weak dynasty—was not ready to admit the existence of any rival to his self-professed divine status. His answer was the answer of a supposed cosmological sovereign: "And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (Ex. 5:2). Like Nebuchadnezzar after him (Dan. 3:15), Pharaoh saw himself as the divine-human link, the capstone of a bureaucratic pyramid in a divine state, beyond which there could be no appeal. Also like Nebuchadnezzar, he was cut down in the midst of his kingdom.

Pharaoh was so enraged at the request of Moses, that he decided to impose a punishment on the Israelites. He forbade the taskmasters to deliver straw to the Hebrews for the construction of bricks. Their work load would therefore increase, since the size of the bricks would remain the same, and presumably also the numerical quotas. "And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God" (Ex. 5:8).[3]

This punishment was calculated to accomplish several ends. *First* and perhaps most important, it was to discourage Moses and Aaron from challenging his authority as a divine master. If they did it again, their people would be injured even more. *Second*, it was an effective means of alienating the people from these two leaders. If, every time they came before Pharaoh in the name of their God, the two leaders would draw the wrath of Pharaoh upon the Israelites, the Israelites

1. Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1948] 1962), p. 15.

2. I am assuming the correctness of Donovan Courville's reconstructed chronology of Egypt.

3. Prof. A. S. Yahuda argued that the use of the Hebrew word for "tale" is so specific that it demonstrates that Exodus was not written by some post-exilic priest. The "tale" was a specific measurement, not a numerical quantity. He pointed to the discovery of a tomb picture which shows a man measuring the bricks. The writer of Exodus was therefore familiar with this specific usage. Yahuda, *The Accuracy of the Bible* (New York: Dutton, 1935), pp. 76–77.

would presumably seek to disassociate themselves from the pair. They would bring pressure on them to cease and desist. This would tend to discourage all future leaders from rising up in the name of the slaves, or in the name of their God. The slaves, without leadership, would remain slaves. *Third*, the Pharaoh would be able to reduce the costs of construction of his cities. The output of the slaves would remain constant, but the state's input costs would be reduced. No longer would Egyptians be expected to supply the Israelites with straw. This labor service would henceforth come from the slaves. *Fourth*, the slave population would be scattered (Ex. 5:12), thereby reducing the potential military threat to Egypt.

Pharaoh removed one of the crucial factors of production from the brick-making process, yet he required that the daily output of bricks be maintained. His edict reduced the division of labor, since it forced the Hebrews to search out and collect straw, in addition to producing the bricks. *Specialization was reduced*. The edict required the same output despite a reduction in raw material costs. Given the inescapable reality of scarcity, the edict therefore required a compensating increase in labor inputs from the slaves. These would be unpaid labor inputs. Previously, the slaves had been allowed to concentrate on the task of producing bricks from the raw materials supplied by the Egyptian state. Now their time would also be expended in achieving an additional step in the production process. They would have to work longer hours, or work more intensively, or both, in order to produce the same quantity and size of bricks. Specialists in straw-gathering may have been recruited from within the Hebrew community and trained. They would have been removed from the normal work force, thereby increasing the labor burden on those who remained in close proximity to the construction projects. The edict by Pharaoh placed a great burden on the backs of an already heavily burdened slave population.

B. Reduced Efficiency

The punishment was fully consistent with the nature of the sin of the slaves, as perceived by Pharaoh. He said that they were idle, since they wanted time off to sacrifice to their God. Such a waste of time could not be tolerated. It was idleness to substitute the worship of God for brick production. "Let more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words" (Ex. 5:9).

Obviously, there was no day of rest for these slaves. It was a life of almost unending drudgery, one which provided little hope. The Hebrews were destined to spend their lives working on public works projects that honored a false god, the Egyptian Pharaoh, and by implication, the Egyptian state. Only the god of the state might be legitimately honored, and its service was a heavy yoke, one devoid of hope. The static empire of Egypt would, if the Pharaoh had his way, require the compulsory service of the Hebrews until the end of the world. For them, life would be a hell on earth. There would be no rest, no progress, and no escape.

The scattering of the slaves was also important to Pharaoh. Like Christ, who told his enemies that anyone who does not gather with Him scatters abroad (Matt. 12:30), the Pharaoh wanted his enemies scattered. He no doubt recognized, as had the Pharaoh of the enslavement, that the concentrated population of Hebrews in the land of Goshen constituted a potential military threat to Egypt (Ex. 1:10). The Hebrews were scattered by the king's edict (Ex. 5:12), for they were no longer the recipients of straw imported from outside Goshen. Obviously, in these massive building projects, the supplies of straw in the immediate vicinity would have been depleted rapidly. In all likelihood, the supplies had been depleted long before the edict of Pharaoh, since it would have been less expensive for the Egyptian suppliers to have collected the straw close to the construction sites, which were in the region around Goshen. The cost of transporting straw to the construction sites would continually rise, and the Pharaoh transferred this economic burden to the Hebrews. They would have to send more and more of their straw-gatherers out across the Nile valley in order to find this necessary factor of production.

Predictably, the better quality resource, straw, was depleted, and the Hebrews found it economically advantageous to substitute a less efficient—*technically* less efficient—resource: stubble (Ex. 5:12). The cost of locating and transporting straw grew too great; they had to use stubble, working harder to produce as high a quality of bricks as before. This was *economically* more efficient, given the rising cost of using straw, even though the straw was more efficient technically. The Hebrews were forced to "cut corners" with stubble.

Pharaoh used the innate restraints of the land's productivity as a means of disciplining the Hebrews. This decision to misuse a fundamental law of economics—the God-imposed scarcity of nature—turned out to be a disastrous one for Egypt. This was a deliberate mis-

use of the phenomenon of scarcity. Instead of encouraging trade and economic specialization, which scarcity is intended to encourage—a curse which can become a blessing[4]—Pharaoh's edict reduced both trade and specialization. Instead of reducing the costs of production, Pharaoh's edict deliberately increased the costs of production, simply as a punishment. He was misusing God's laws of economics in order to humiliate His people and to keep them from worshiping the true God. For this, Pharaoh subsequently paid dearly, as did his people.

The nature of the punishment testifies to Pharaoh's understanding of the issues involved: theological, political, and economic. He also grasped at least some of the implications of *the law of the optimum mix of production factors*. This law of the optimum production mix is a corollary to *the law of diminishing returns*. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the law of the optimum production mix is really another way of stating the law of diminishing returns.[5] The existence of the optimum factor mix is the conclusion we reach when we acknowledge the existence of the law of diminishing returns. What do economists mean when they speak of the law of diminishing returns?

C. Complementary Factors of Production

We note that when two or more complementary factors of production are combined in the production process, output per unit of resource input rises initially as we add the "sub-optimum" factor of production, and then output begins to fall after the formerly "sub-optimum" resource passes the point of optimality. This economic law might better be described as *the law of variable proportions*.[6] One person, for example, cannot efficiently farm 800 acres, unless he has specialized equipment. Facing the task of farming 800 acres, he adds additional labor. He hires another man to help him work the land. By combining the labor of two workers, the worker-owner sees the value of his farm's total agricultural output increase by more than the cost of hiring the extra laborer. So, he adds more laborers and/or equipment. Output value increases even faster than input costs increase, *initially*.

4. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 12.

5. Wrote Murray Rothbard: "The law of returns states that with the quantity of complementary factors held constant, there always exists some optimum amount of the varying factor." Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, 2nd ed. (Auburn, Alabama: Mises Institute, [1962] 2009), p. 35–36.

6. Joseph Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 260.

But at some point, the law of diminishing returns (variable proportions) tells us, the increases in output value will begin to lag behind the increases in factor input costs. There will be too many workers on the fixed supply of 800 acres. They will get in each other's way, or spend too much time loafing, or fighting, or whatever. Output will actually decline if the owner adds still more laborers without buying or leasing more land. In other words, it will pay him to dismiss some workers. He will either have to *dismiss workers* (the now excessive complementary production factor) or *add more land* (the now "sub-optimum" production factor) to the existing number of workers.

There is, in this agricultural example, *an optimum mix* (optimum proportions) of the complementary factors of production: more land or fewer workers. To produce a product at this optimum point minimizes waste and maximizes income. The existence of such an optimum point therefore pressures the resource owner to release one factor of production—in this case, labor—so that this scarce factor can be used in some other industry or on some other farm, thereby increasing total output and maximizing consumer satisfaction with a given quantity of resource inputs. The former resource renter is a beneficiary of this decision: he no longer needs to pay for the freed-up resource input. Other resource users also become beneficiaries, for a new source of the scarce resource has now been made available. The consumer is also a beneficiary: competition among producers will tend to reduce the cost of final output and will also eventually reduce the consumer price of the product.

We can examine this topic from another angle. If the law of diminishing returns were not true, then by taking a fixed supply of one factor of production and adding to it a complementary factor, eventually the proportion of the first (fixed) factor in the production mix would approach (though never quite reach) zero percent. After you reach the point of diminishing returns, the original (fixed) factor of production is increasingly "swamped" by the second (variable) factor. (Both factors are actually variable in practice; this is only an illustration.) To use an analogy from mathematics, the "swamped" factor of production is like a fraction with an increasingly large denominator, and therefore a decreasing value. One-to-two becomes one-to-three, and then downward to, say, one-to-five billion. One five billionth is obviously a lot smaller than one half. The value of the fraction approaches zero as a limit. By fixing the numerator and increasing the

denominator, the "percentage contribution" of the numerator to the "value" of the fractional number is reduced.[7]

To return to the example of the 800-acre farm, as we add more and more men, we will eventually overwhelm the productivity of the resource factor which is in fixed supply, namely, land. *If*, by adding men continually, but without adding more land (the "swamped" fixed production factor), we could increase output forever, then land and labor in this example are not really complementary factors of production. They do not really "work together" in the production process, since we can endlessly increase the value of output by adding units of only a single factor. This is the same as saying that *the production factor* that we keep adding is, in fact, *the consumer product* we are producing. There really is no production process in this example; *our variable resource input is, in fact, the final output*.

Let us consider this argument from another angle: *subtracting resources*. If we could get an increase in the value of output by continually adding a variable resource, then we could also get a decrease in the cost of inputs without lowering the value of output simply by subtracting the previously "fixed" resource input. After all, why pay for a resource that really is not contributing anything of value to the production process? To use the subtraction example, assume that land is now the variable resource and labor is the fixed resource. (Maybe a labor union contract has made labor the fixed resource.) The value of output will not decline as we steadily reduce the land component of the production mix. But in such a situation, we really never had a production mix; the factors of production were not really complementary.

To summarize: if we can forever continue to increase the value of output by adding one factor of production, or (alternatively) if we can maintain the value of output by continually removing the other "complementary" factor, then there is no production process. There is no true combination of production factors. The factors are not really complementary.

We need not limit our discussion to land and labor. Land and water are equally good examples. If you take away all the water in agricultural production, you produce a fruitless desert. If you add water continually, you produce a lake. Neither is a farm. *There is, in theory,*

7. The analogy is imperfect because there are no "optimal" fractions. You never get increasing returns by adding to the denominator. The analogy applies only to the case where the optimum production mix has been passed.

an economically optimum production mix, in which the value of the water (cost of providing it) and the value of the land (cost of leasing or buying it) are combined to *maximize net income*, where one additional drop of water or one additional grain of dirt would reduce total net income if either were added (paid for) in the production process. Remember, we are talking about *income*, not technology as such. We are not talking about maximum numbers of goods, but about net income (revenues minus costs). We are, in short, discussing economics, not plant biology or engineering.

The law of diminishing returns (variable proportions) applies to every area of production, not just agriculture.[8] It is an aspect of the creation. It existed even before the Fall of man and God's curse of the ground.

D. Scarcity Before the Fall

Even in the garden, there were diminishing returns—if nothing else, in the fields of genetics, aesthetics, and technology. Adam had to work in the garden. He had to make it more productive. He had to combine factors of production in order to produce anything new. Perhaps he had to plant one species in one spot rather than another, for aesthetic effects. More likely, he would have begun to cross-breed within certain species to produce flowers or edible fruits that did not occur "naturally." We are not told. What we are told is that he had a responsibility to make the garden bloom. He needed to understand technology and aesthetics in order to produce a fruitful environment.

What about economics? Did Adam face *an economic law* (constraint) of variable proportions, rather than just technological and aesthetic constraints? I believe that he did. If we define scarcity as "greater demand than supply at zero price," then Adam seems to have faced a world of scarcity. If nothing else, his time had to be allocated. If he had worked on one job, he could not simultaneously have worked on another. He would have faced the decision to invest time and natural resources in producing one capital good (tool of production). This would have been a true decision; he could not simultaneously have used these resources to produce a different sort of capital good. The very concept of an *economic production decision* implies an *optimum production mix*. Only if there was no scarcity (including a scarcity of time) before the Fall could Adam have escaped the constraints of an eco-

8. Schumpeter, *History*, p. 261. See also Gary North, *Sovereignty And Dominion*, ch. 31: "The Law of Diminishing Returns."

nomically optimum production mix. Then the production constraint would have been exclusively technological, genetic, or aesthetic.

1. Knowledge

We need to focus on that most scarce of all resources, knowledge. Was Adam omniscient? The Bible teaches that God alone is omniscient. *Omniscience is an incommunicable attribute of God*. There is a special knowledge which belongs only to God: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29). *Adam therefore faced limits on his knowledge*. He had to learn. He faced a world which required *an educational process based on trial and error*. Eventually, there would have been children and descendants. He could not perfectly have known the mind of any other human being. Thus, he could not perfectly have known other people's wants, needs, and ability to pay in order to attain their goals. He would have needed a source of publicly available information (a price system) in order to learn about the kinds of economic demand that other people placed on the available resources, including the demand for knowledge in its broadest sense, and also the demand for time. *He would have needed knowledge concerning just exactly what resources were available*. His incentive to discover this would have been dependent on the economic demand for resources in the marketplace. Thus, *the very concept of the incommunicable attribute of God's omniscience points to the inescapable concept of scarcity*. Man has to give up something in order to gain certain kinds of knowledge.

The Fall of man came, in part, because man was unwilling to pay for a specific resource: righteous judgment. He refused to render righteous judgment on the serpent when he heard the tempter's offer. Adam did not immediately judge the serpent provisionally and then wait for God to return to render final judgment on the serpent and Satan. Adam did not wait for God to render this final judgment and then invest him and his wife with *the judge's robes of authority* before he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam therefore faced a universe governed by scarcity, even in the garden. He faced scarcity of good judgment and scarcity of time. He was unwilling to "pay the price," meaning the *judgment price* and the *time price*. He wanted instant gratification.[9] But he could not escape

9. Gary North, "Witnesses and Judges," *Biblical Economics Today*, VI (Aug./Sept. 1983), pp. 2–3. Reprinted as Appendix E in North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*.

paying a price. The price he actually paid was a lot higher than he had estimated.[10] He therefore faced the restraint of scarcity.

2. Management and Specialization

The creation has built into it incentives for management. The very genetic structure of plants and animals makes management by man technologically productive. Men can master the art of breeding animals and plants, a subordinately creative skill which is analogous to God's original creative act. The genetic structure of man also makes management by man more productive, but not the kind of management possessed by the breeder. Man is not given that kind of authority over God's image. The genetic reality of mankind is that people are different in terms of their inborn capacities, despite being members of a single species. In this respect, mankind reflects the Trinity, for God's three Persons have varying functions in relationship to the creation, despite being equal in essence and glory. Men become more productive individually by co-operating with each other. The most important aspect of this social co-operation is ethical.

The curse of the ground has made co-operation even more imperative, for the creation's original scarcity is accentuated by increasing costs as a result of the curse on both man and the ground.

The fact that in God's creation there are complementary factors of production implies that for any given output, there is *a structure of production*. The planner must actively *combine* factors of production. Complementary factors of production must be combined in terms of *a plan*. One plan meets the requirements of the planner better than all other possible plans. *This plan is both personal and objective*, because God's personal and objective plan undergirds all human planning, and gives meaning to all human planning. *The existence of an omniscient God with a perfect plan is what makes possible human planning*.[11] Thus, we must conclude that there is a law of diminishing economic returns, even without the curse; the curse has only increased the need to plan production carefully because of the effects of entropy. The importance of allocating resources is magnified in a cursed world, but there was still an allocation problem in the garden.

10. *Ibid.*, ch. 11.

11. *Ibid.*, ch. 5: "Economic Value: Objective and Subjective."

E. Epistemology and Optimum Production

We must recognize the reality of the economic implications of the fact of scarcity. *If there were no optimum production mix, then Pharaoh's punishment would make no sense. It would have been no punishment at all.* The Hebrews would have been able to manufacture just as many bricks as before with no additional inputs, including labor. But the punishment really was a punishment, as the Hebrews complained to Moses. The Bible therefore draws our attention to economic theory at this point. There is an optimum production mix. There is a law of diminishing returns. We achieve greater output per unit of resource input by means of the division of labor and the consequent specialization of production. For any given process of production, *at any point in time*, the economist tells us that there is some *theoretically optimum mix of production factors*.

There is a major epistemological problem here: a "point in time" is a theoretically discrete unit of time that is in fact immeasurable and is therefore *outside of time*. A point in time is therefore timeless. It is analogous to a theoretically discrete point in a line which is also autonomous and immeasurable. A point in time is a theoretical (and indescribable) period in which human action is not possible—"no time for action"—and if human action is not possible, it becomes problematical (self-contradictory) to speak of such phenomena as market-clearing prices, knowledge, and responsibility. We are dealing here with innate contradictions or antinomies in all human thought, so at best we can only *approach* the idea of the optimum production mix, just as we can only approach the idea of economic equilibrium. If we lean too heavily on the weak reed of autonomous human logic, the reed collapses.

While men can never have perfect knowledge of this economically optimum production mix, either in theory or in practice, especially in a world of constant change (including technological change), they still must try to approach this optimum mix if they wish to minimize waste and maximize income. Biblical economics informs us that *there is an objective plan in the mind of God*. This objective plan serves as a theoretical foundation for the assertion of the existence of this *economically optimum mix*. Maximum economic output (and therefore maximum income) requires specific co-operation in terms of a plan.

Understand, however, that approaching this optimum is not easy, even as a theoretical matter. What are the success indicators that enable planning agents to determine whether or not they are approach-

ing the optimum production mix? The existence of profit and loss indicators in a competitive free market is the preliminary answer. Nevertheless, these indicators have built-in limits, both in practice and in theory. Modern economic theory is officially individualistic. But methodological individualism, if pursued to its logical conclusion, does not allow us to conclude anything about optimum aggregates. Once again, the problem of making interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility reappears to haunt the humanistic economist.

We cannot legitimately, as "neutral" humanistic economists, make interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility. This means that civil government cannot make such comparisons scientifically. "Since all costs and benefits are subjective, no government can accurately identify, much less establish, the optimum quantity of anything."[12] But neither can any other organization. According to the principles of methodological subjectivism, individuals can only make comparisons of the *subjectively interpreted results* of their own *subjectively constructed plans*, and even here, there is the epistemological problem of making *intertemporal* comparisons.[13] After all, I may have forgotten today what I really intended to achieve yesterday. Or my tastes may have changed in the meantime. Furthermore, the purchasing power of the monetary unit may have changed, yet I cannot measure the extent of this change without constructing an aggregate index number of prices, including the subjective importance or "weighted average" *for me* of each price change. I need *permanent standards*—ethical standards above all, but also aesthetic and economic standards—to make such *comparisons over time*. I need *an objective personal "index number"* by which to measure economic change. But by the logic of methodological individualism, there are no such fixed reference points, no unchanging standards. There are no objective standards by which I can formulate my subjective standards, nor can I measure economic changes over time. There are no such scientific measures.

In short, modern economic theory is incapable of discovering what this optimum production mix is, either in the case of a private firm or in the case of a society. The concept of *optimum* necessarily involves

12. Charles W. Baird, "The Philosophy and Ideology of Pollution Regulation," *Cato Journal*, II (Spring 1982), p. 303.

13. Ludwig Lachmann, *Capital, Expectations, and the Market Process: Essays on the Theory of the Market Economy* (Kansas City, Kansas: Sheed, Andrews & McMeel, 1977), pp. 83–85. Lachmann invoked the epistemologically suspect "common experience" in a desperate and ill-fated attempt to refute Prof. G. L. S. Shackle's assertion that an individual cannot make intertemporal comparisons.

the use of *aggregate value*, including value aggregates that must be compared over time. But pure subjective value theory, if pressed to its logical conclusions, cannot deal with interpersonal value aggregates, nor is it possible for "scientific" economics to compare intrapersonal subjective utility over time. Thus, the more consistent economists have admitted that no one can scientifically determine the optimum quantity of anything.

This is why God's revelation of His *permanent law structure* is an imperative concept for the very existence of truly logical economics. Without such a permanent standard, simultaneously personal and objective, economics is logically impossible. In a subjective universe without an authoritative God who reveals Himself to man, who in turn is made in God's image and can therefore understand God's revelation to man, there can be no permanent objective standards that are relevant or meaningful for human action, including economics.

F. Other Things Never Remain Equal

One critic of the concept of the law of diminishing returns was Julian Simon. He argued that economists have erred in attempting to apply the concept in the case of mineral extraction.

> The concept of diminishing returns applies to situations where one element is fixed in quantity—say, a given copper mine—and where the type of technology is also fixed. But neither of these factors apply to mineral extraction in the long run. New lodes are found, and new cost-cutting extraction technologies are developed. Therefore, whether the cost rises or falls in the long run depends on the extent to which advances in technology and new lode discoveries counteract the tendency toward increasing cost in the absence of the new developments. Historically, as we have seen, costs have consistently fallen rather than risen, and there is no empirical warrant for believing that this historical trend will reverse itself in the foreseeable future. Hence there is no "law" of diminishing returns appropriate here.[14]

Simon also applied this interpretation of the law of diminishing returns to the field of population theory. He argued that classical economic theory followed Malthus and held that additional people would reduce the per capita share of fixed economic resources. "The more people using a stock of resources, the lower the income per person, if all else remains equal."[15] But new people coming into the

14. Julian Simon, *The Ultimate Resource* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 53.
15. *Ibid*., p. 257.

community have the effect of changing the responses of other people, especially their parents. Fathers start working harder, or longer hours, or both.[16] Parents become more future-oriented in many instances. They begin saving a larger proportion of their income. In short, the honeymoon is over when Junior arrives. "More mouths to feed" means more food to feed them in nations that are future-oriented and whose people possess what is known as the Protestant (or Puritan) work ethic.

These observations, however, must not be taken as refutations of the existence of the law of diminishing returns. On the contrary, such evidence points directly to the existence of such a law. If it is true, as it so often appears to be, that "necessity is the mother of invention," then from whence comes the perceived necessity? If additional mouths to feed call forth ever-greater exertion and creativity to feed them, how is it that these mouths produce the desirable stimulus? Isn't it because there was an optimum production mix under the old conditions that was disturbed by the new mouths? Isn't it because the new conditions changed the thinking of the former honeymooners, giving them new incentives to mature and become more responsible? Isn't it the very pressure of the optimum production mix that calls forth better efforts to find *new combinations of resources* (new plans) in response to *new economic conditions*?

The law of diminishing returns (optimum production mix) is an aspect of the creation which can, given the proper ethical and institutional circumstances, lead to human progress. Sinful men need to be pressured into greater self-discipline, more effective thinking, and better strategies of innovation. One of the means of calling forth these better efforts is scarcity. While the law of diminishing returns would have prevailed in the garden, the direct economic incentives to overcome scarcity in a cursed world augment this original aspect of the creation. Thus, it is unwise to de-emphasize the importance of this law of human action, as Simon appeared to do. But the concept should not be misused, either. It should not lead men to conclude that the price of raw materials will necessarily rise if population grows. The concept should not be used to justify a zero population growth ideology.

What we should understand is that the existence of an optimum production mix is what lures entrepreneurs, inventors, and economists to seek out better (less wasteful) ways to accomplish their goals

16. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

in the midst of endless change. Discover this better way, and then *persuade the customer to spend his money on your service or product* because you have, in fact, discovered this better way, and you, the producer, will prosper. So will the customers. Profit in a free market is the success indicator that reveals the better way, meaning a more optimal mix of scarce economic resources.

G. Success Indicators and Relevant Information

Men are supposed to co-operate. This is an ethical requirement, but it is also an economic imperative, if men wish to increase their per capita output. In almost all cases, the intervention of the state into the market reduces this co-operation, since such intervention thwarts the voluntary transfer of accurate, self-correcting economic information. State interference reduces the division of labor in most cases, although it can also lead to overspecialization when it encourages technical developments that are, from the point of view of the market, uneconomical.[17] It is significant that Israel had no laws that discriminated against "strangers in the land." No laws against immigration or emigration exist in the Bible. A free market in labor services is established by biblical law. The "city on a hill" in the Bible has no barbed wire around it, to keep foreigners out or citizens in. It is the modern humanist societies that erect barbed wire barriers: the West to keep out "undesirables," and the East to keep in "desirables." To prevent both overspecialization and underspecialization, producers need the continual feedback of economic information provided by the market's pricing system. This means that they need private ownership, for without this, there can be no rational assessment of profit and loss, meaning no economic calculation. Without private ownership, it becomes difficult or impossible for future-predicting entrepreneurs to collect profits that are the residual of accurate forecasting.[18]

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17. An example of such "forced" technological innovation is the development of capital-intensive, labor-saving equipment that has been adopted by producers because of the artificially high cost of hiring trade union laborers. The producers substitute expensive labor-saving equipment when the cost of labor gets too high. If the government had not granted to the trade union the right to keep employers from firing strikers and hiring replacements ("scabs") during a strike, the employers would have been able to hire laborers at a market price. The above-market price of unionized labor encourages employers to search for labor substitutes. Laws against "illegal aliens" push up labor costs by restricting the supply of legal laborers; this encourages over-investment in labor—substituting equipment—meaning over-investment compared to what economic freedom would have produced.

18. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 33: "The Entrepreneurial Function."

An enslaved population is unable to make full use of the information which is available to producers, for the source of the continual correcting of this information must come from a bureaucratic agency —an agency that does not offer employee incentives comparable to employee incentives in a free market for the collection of *accurate and economically relevant information*, or incentives for affected institutions to respond appropriately to new information. If a society relies heavily on the output of an enslaved population, then its non-slave members are also unable to make the most efficient use of the available resources, for *the society's information-delivery system is made increasingly unreliable*. Neither the slaves nor the taskmasters know what scarce economic resources really should cost. Without a competitive market, the planners are flying blind. *Those who fly blind eventually crash*.

Conclusion

Pharaoh decided to tighten the screws on the Israelites. In doing so, he reduced the freedom of a productive people to increase the per capita wealth of the Egyptian nation. He imposed new costs on them that could only reduce their productivity, either by reducing the division of labor or by grinding them into despair, both of which would ultimately waste Egyptian resources. He abandoned a free market in goods and services. He increased the authority of his bureaucratic state. He brought his judgment on the people of God, merely because their representatives asked for time off to worship God. Because of Egypt's heavy reliance on the slave system, neither Pharaoh nor the nobles knew what the cost of any resource really was. The more rigorously he enslaved them, the less reliable was the economic knowledge available to the planners. Pharaoh thereby proclaimed his faith in Egypt's theology: the sovereignty of Pharaoh and the bureaucratic state that was incarnate in his own person. The result was the destruction of both the Egyptian state and his person.

8

COVENANTAL JUDGMENT

Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

EXODUS 8:19

The theocentric issue here is God as the cosmic Judge.

The supernatural contest between the representatives of God and the magicians of Egypt escalated from the beginning. In the first confrontation, Aaron cast down the rod that God had presented to Moses. It became a serpent. The magicians matched this display of supernatural transformation, but then Aaron's serpent swallowed the serpents of the Egyptians. This presumably did not help the magicians to persuade Pharaoh that their magic was stronger than the supernatural power available to these two Hebrews (Ex. 7:10–12).

A. Access to Power: Plagues

The second display of power involved the Nile's water: plague number one. Aaron stretched out the rod, and the waters of Egypt turned to blood. The magicians matched this supernatural act (Ex. 7:19–22). In this instance, their magic seemed comparable to Aaron's. However, this was no consolation to Pharaoh; now he had even more bloody water than he had before the contest.

Third, this same "victory" of Egyptian magic was repeated in the coming of the frogs (Ex. 8:5–7). This was the second plague. We can almost imagine Pharaoh's consternation, how he must have said to himself, "No, you idiots, not more frogs; fewer frogs! Show me how powerful you are by removing these frogs."

Fourth were the lice: the third plague. "And the Lord said unto

Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast" (Ex. 8:16–18). At this point, they made their confession: "This is the finger of God."

His magicians were determined to prove their mastery of the black arts by matching Aaron, plague for plague, thereby *reinforcing God's judgment on Egypt*. But there is no indication that they brought additional blood, frogs, and lice to the land of Goshen, where the Hebrews lived. They simply multiplied the burdens of Egypt. The Egyptians were worse off as a result of the nation's magicians. The arrogance of the magicians had made things even less bearable.

The first three plagues afflicted Goshen: blood, frogs, and lice. Only with the fourth plague, flies (or insects), did God declare that Goshen would be spared (Ex. 8:22). As slaves, the Israelites were under the covenantal rule of the Egyptians, both for good (the economic benefits of living in an extensive empire) and evil. Like the animals who were cursed because of man's sin in the garden, or draftees in an army ruled by an incompetent Commander-in-Chief, so are the slaves of a rebellious culture. In the case of the ethical condition of the Israelite slaves, their subsequent behavior indicated that they were not wholly innocent victims of a society whose first principles they should have utterly rejected. The leeks and onions of Egypt had their appeal in Goshen, too.

That God should bring frogs to curse Egypt as the second plague was fitting. The frog was an important fertility deity in Egypt. The frog-goddess Heqet at Abydos was pictured as sitting at the bier of Osirus, a god of death and rebirth. Frog amulets were popular as symbols of new life and new birth. "The 'matlametlo,' a great frog over five inches long, hides in the root of a bush as long as there is a drought, and when rain falls, it rushes out. It comes with the rain as the beetle with the rising of the Nile; both are symbolic of new life and growth."[1] Just as the Nile, Egypt's life-bringer, became the death-bringer, so did the frogs become a plague.

1. Jane E. Harrison, "Introduction" to E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris* (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, [1911] 1961), p. vii. The introduction actually first appeared as an essay in *The Spectator* (April 13, 1912), and was included in the 1961 edition.

After the frogs came the third plague, when the dust of the ground became lice. Again, we can almost imagine Pharaoh's thoughts, as he stood scratching himself: "Look, I don't need any more proof of your mastery of magic. If you can't get rid of the lice, then just sit quietly. Who needs magical powers like yours at a time like this?" The magicians tried to match this event and failed (Ex. 8:18). At this point, they capitulated. If they could not make the nation even more miserable than it already was, if they were unable to louse up Egypt even more, then their opponent must be God. "This is the finger of God," they said, using the same term which Jesus used to describe the Spirit of God in tasting out demons (Luke 11:20: "finger of God"; Matt. 12:28: "Spirit of God"). They recognized that they were dealing with supernatural power that was greater than their own, meaning a God who was more powerful than the gods of Egypt. By telling Pharaoh that the finger of God was the source of the power facing him, they were advising him to capitulate. We are told that he hearkened not unto them, and that his heart was hardened. He understood what they meant, and he refused to listen.

B. Comparative Wealth

Then came seven other plagues: swarms of insects (the King James Version inserts the words "of flies" after swarms, but the Hebrew is not specific), the death of all the cattle of Egypt, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness. In the final seven plagues, the Egyptians were afflicted, while the Israelites were not. Because of this protection, the Israelites were increasing their per capita wealth in comparison to the Egyptians. They were growing steadily richer—not just comparatively, but absolutely. How could this be? If the Israelites were not actually increasing the size of their herds, how could the plagues have increased their per capita wealth? Because demand for cattle in the marketplace was now focused on the only available local supply, and the Israelites possessed this local monopoly. The market value of their cattle rose, meaning that the exchange value of their cattle rose. Furthermore, their fields had not been struck by the hail, so their crops had survived. The kinds of wealth held by the Egyptians after the plagues—gold, jewels, etc.—always drop in value relative to survival goods during a major catastrophe. The "coin of the realm" during a famine is food, not pieces of metal or shining stones (Gen. 47:15–16).[2] The Hebrews possessed food, and all the demand

2. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 34: "The Misapplication of Intrinsic Value."

for food would have been concentrated on their possessions. They had what the Egyptians needed in order to survive. The market value of their assets increased.

C. The Problem of the Cattle

We face a difficult problem in explaining this economic event. The plague on the cattle of Egypt destroyed them all (Ex. 9:6). Then came the pestilence of the boils, which struck Egyptians, their other animals, and even the priests (Ex. 9:11). (Fortunately for the Egyptians, the magicians had by this time given up any attempts to match God's plagues, boil for boil.) Finally, Egypt was struck with a mighty hail. Some of the Egyptians believed Moses this time: "He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: And he that regarded not the word of the Lord left his servants and his cattle in the field" (Ex. 9:20–21). The problem: Where had they purchased these new herds of cattle?

They could either have bought or confiscated cattle from the Hebrews, since the Hebrews had not lost their cattle in the plague (Ex. 3:6). The Hebrews had cattle after the hail, since the hail did not strike Goshen (Ex. 9:26). It is also possible that cattle were imported from Canaan. We are not told. If the Egyptians bought cattle from the Hebrews, it meant that they were unwilling to confiscate the Hebrews' cattle. It would have been possible for them to have marched in and taken cattle out of Goshen. They did not confiscate all the cattle, nor did they buy all the cattle, since the Hebrews still had cattle when the hail began. Perhaps they never sought the Hebrews' cattle. We know that the Hebrews took large herds of cattle with them when they left Egypt (Ex. 12:38). This indicates that the Egyptians did not confiscate their cattle after the plague, and probably not after the hail. Conceivably, they did confiscate the cattle after the hail, and gave back the cattle at the time of the exodus, but the text does not say that this happened.

When the hail stopped, the Israelites had all the cattle still alive in Egypt. Did the Egyptians buy from them? It is not easy to say. The Hebrews requested precious metals and jewels from the Egyptians at the time of the exodus, which might be interpreted as a unique event, indicating that they had not owned any jewels before. Did the Egyptians buy their cattle from the Hebrews without paying in jewelry? We do not know. What we do know is that the Israelites had crops and cattle, the key resources, immediately following the hail. *The slaves were now rich*.

Of course, if the Israelites had been facing starvation, then their position would not have risen absolutely. They would have been better off than the Egyptians, but they would have had to consume their resources, making it impossible for them to have profited from their position of relatively greater wealth. But they were being protected by God; they were not going to starve. They might have traded their cattle and crops for the surplus gold and jewels of the Egyptians, had God decided to let them remain in Egypt. They would have collected the valuables of the Egyptians in exchange for their surplus food. However, God had even better plans; they would keep the food and also collect the jewels of the Egyptians. God's protection had already made them the beneficiaries of rising per capita wealth, even before they "borrowed" from their former masters. They had monopoly ownership of the crucial survival resources in a time of great shortages. They had what the Egyptians needed. Not only had their masters lost the necessities, they would shortly have to forfeit their luxuries, either in exchange for the Israelites' food or in restitution for the generations of bondage.

D. The Sovereign Who Failed

The Egyptians had been wiped out economically by the plagues. They had been ruined. Their ruler, who was theoretically divine, was stubborn and arrogant. He was the protector of Egypt, yet he had led Egypt into an economic disaster. He was the ruler of the Nile, and it had been turned to blood, killing the fish. Walter Brueggemann's comments on the significance of this judgment against the Nile are to the point: "We cannot grasp the trouble fully until we recall that the Nile River is not only a geographical referent. It is also an expression of the imperial power of fertility. It is administration of the Nile which permits the king to generate and guarantee life. The failure of the Nile and its life system means that the empire does not have in itself the power of life (cf. Ezek. 29:3). It is for this reason that the plague of the Nile is so crucial (Ex. 7:7–22). An assault on the Nile strikes at the heart of Pharaoh's claim to authority."[3]

Pharaoh was also the controller of the seasons, yet the nation's agricultural system had been disrupted by hail—hail in a land where it seldom rained! He was the shepherd of the nation's flocks, and the cattle had been struck with sickness and then with hail. Wilson wrote,

3. Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), p. 327.

concerning the social function of the Pharaoh: "The herdsman is primarily the pastor, the 'feeder,' and a first responsibility of the state was to see that the people were fed. Thus the king of Egypt was the god who had brought fertility to Egypt, produced the life-giving waters, and presented the gods with the sheaf of grain which symbolized abundant food. Indeed, an essential function of his kingship was that of a medicine man, whose magic ensured good crops."[4] This Pharaoh had failed in every respect to measure up to the theological system of Egypt. God had hardened his heart, thereby increasing his innate stubbornness, in order to display the power of a true God. Speaking of the Pharaoh, God said: "And in very deed for this cause I raise thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Ex. 9:16). God would continue to demonstrate before other kings just how sovereign the Pharaoh really was.

Except possibly for a brief period under Joseph, the Egyptians had clung to their *theology of the continuity of being* for centuries. They had placed themselves under the sovereign power of a god, they believed. Their prosperity was guaranteed by a divine man, and their future life beyond the grave would be analogous to their life on earth: under the jurisdiction of the Pharaoh. Again, citing Wilson: "Since the central factor in this world was the divine nature of the king, who owned and controlled everything within Egypt, the next world would be based on the same absolute authority. Life after death, independent of the Pharaoh, would thus be out of the question for this early period."[5] Everything in Egypt took place under the supposed sovereignty of a king-god. What the Egyptians assented to when the pharaohs put the Israelites in bondage was this: a king-god on earth had lawful, sovereign power over the representatives of the God of the Bible. No king reigns apart from a concept of legitimate rule, and the assent of the Egyptians to the decisions of their ruler brought them into conflict with the God of the Bible.

E. Covenants and Representative Government

There are covenants on earth. The Egyptians were under a covenant with their king. This covenant had been reaffirmed when they sold their lands to the Pharaoh of the famine (Gen. 47:20–26). They had

4. John A. Wilson, "Egypt," in Henri Frankfort, *et al., The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1946] 1977), pp. 79–80.

5. John A. Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt: An Interpretation of Ancient Egyptian Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1951] 1967), p. 65.

entered into another covenant when that Pharaoh gave the land of Goshen to the family of Joseph (Gen. 47:1–6). This covenant was broken by a later Pharaoh, and the Egyptians were under his rule by choice, by the prior sale of their lands, and by the theology of Egypt. His covenant was their covenant; the breaking of his covenant with the family of Joseph was also the breaking of their covenant with the family of Joseph. *Men are judged in social orders in terms of the decisions made by their legitimate covenantal rulers*.

This is an important concept. The Bible teaches the doctrine of representative government. This refers to all government, not just civil government. Representative government applies to churches, corporations, trusts, and families. Adam, our representative before God, sinned, and we are under a curse. This "federal headship" of Adam was based on a concept of representative government under a covenant. So was the "federal headship" of Pharaoh.

Pharaoh was the federal head of Egypt. Egypt's theology recognized this; he was seen as the divine-human link, the representative of the Egyptian gods. When the judgment of God began, it struck the Pharaoh's house first. His magicians' serpents were consumed by Aaron's. Then the escalation carried the conflict into the rivers and fields and homes of the whole land. Goshen was protected after the initial three plagues because God's people resided there, and because they were captives, not fully assenting citizens, of Egypt. Egyptians far removed from the seat of power were afflicted with the insects, pestilence, boils, and hail. They knew nothing of the conflict between Moses and the Pharaoh. They had never heard of Moses or Aaron. Yet their crops were destroyed, their waters turned to blood, their land filled with the stench of death. When they reclined on their beds or walked through their homes, the squishing of frogs was continual. Egyptians who had never personally owned, controlled, or punished a Hebrew slave were scratching lice day and night. Poor farmers, who lived on the edge of starvation, saw their milk cows die. What had they done to deserve this? *They had believed in a false god*. Now that this god was at last being brought under judgment by the true God, they became recipients of that judgment. Their self-proclaimed god had stood in terms of his sovereign kingdom and its prosperity to challenge God's own representatives. To demonstrate the true source of sovereignty, God smashed Pharaoh and his kingdom, including his people.

F. Methodologies

To imagine that the judgments of God, in time and on earth, are limited to personal, individualistic penalties, is to misread the Bible. If anything, the reverse is true, in time and on earth. *God's collective curses, like His collective blessings, are proclaimed in the Bible.* God does not promise that every good man will prosper economically, or that every evil man will be brought low. What the Bible promises is that covenantally faithful societies will prosper in the long run, and that covenantally rebellious ones will be crushed eventually.

This brings up the question of *methodological individualism*. The Bible teaches *methodological covenantalism*, not methodological individualism. When we speak of "society," we have in mind an association of men which is under the law of God, and through which men and institutions are blessed or judged by God. A social covenant *does* exist, whether explicit or implicit in human documents or institutions. Thus, methodological covenantalism conflicts with the anarchism of the methodological individualist. Rothbard's libertarian view of society is not conformable to the story of God's judgment of the Egyptian masses. "We have talked at length of individual rights; but what, it may be asked, of the 'rights of society'? Don't they supersede the rights of the mere individual? The libertarian, however, is an individualist; he believes that one of the prime errors in social theory is to treat 'society' as if it were an actually existing entity. 'Society' is sometimes treated as a superior or quasi-divine figure with overriding 'rights' of its own; at other times as an existing evil which can be blamed for all the ills of the world. The individualist holds that only individuals exist, think, feel, choose, and act; and that 'society' is not a living entity but simply a label for a set of interacting individuals. Treating society as a thing that chooses and acts, then, serves to obscure the real forces at work."[6]

In terms of the history of Western philosophy, Rothbard was a nominalist. He did not believe in the independent reality of collectives. He argued that collectives are merely names that people apply to relationships among individuals. Individuals are sovereign; collectives are not. Most free market economists are nominalists. As an anarchist, Rothbard was more self-conscious about this than his limited-government peers. In contrast, those social theorists who declare their commitment to the independent existence of collectives are part

6. Murray N. Rothbard, *For a New Liberty: The Libertarian Manifesto*, 2nd ed. (Auburn, Alabama: Mises Institute, [1973] 2006), p. 45.

of the realist tradition. Nominalists and realists had done battle from the beginning. Both groups—whether real or merely named—are opposed to biblical covenantalism.

Rothbard rejected methodological holism (collectivism), which sees the evolution of society as a force independent of human will and human action. But methodological covenantalism is not methodological holism; it does not view society as a personal entity separate from men. It sees men as being *represented by others before God* in various institutional relationships. Men suffer and prosper, not only by what they do as individuals, but also by the decisions of those in authority over them. Methodological covenantalism teaches that there are law-governed arrangements by which God deals with people—not impersonal natural law, or the law of karma (reincarnation), or evolutionary law, but God-ordained law. The biblical view categorically rejects the utilitarian view of law presented by classical liberals, e.g., Mises and Hayek.[7]

G. Mises vs. the Covenant

Mises' rejection of this covenantal outlook, which he equated with holism, was characteristically uncompromising.

> According to the doctrines of universalism, conceptual realism, holism, collectivism, and some representatives of Gestaltpsychologie, society is an entity living its own life, independent of and separate from the lives of the various individuals, acting on its own behalf and aiming at its own ends which are different from the ends sought by the individuals. Then, of course, an antagonism between the aims of society and those of its members can emerge. In order to safeguard the flowering and further development of society it becomes necessary to master the selfishness of the individuals and to compel them to sacrifice their egoistic designs to the benefit of society. At this point all these holistic doctrines are bound to abandon the secular methods of human science and logical reasoning and to shift to theological or metaphysical professions of faith. They must assume that Providence, through its prophets, apostles, and charismatic leaders, forces men who are constitutionally wicked, i.e., prone to pursue their own ends, to walk in the ways of righteousness which the Lord or Weltgeist or history wants them to walk.[8]

In other words, Mises rejected the epistemological significance of the fact that *God converts men*. Sometimes, these men become repre-

7. For a critique of Hayek, see Appendix B, "The Evolutionists' Defense of the Market," in North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*.

8. Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1949), p. 145.

sentative agents before God for other men whom God places under their jurisdiction, whether those represented approve of it or not (as in the case of the Israelites who wanted Moses and Aaron to go away and leave them alone). Mises rejected this explanation of human affairs.

> This is the philosophy which has characterized from time immemorial the creeds of primitive tribes. It has been an element in all religious teachings. Man is bound to comply with the law issued by a superhuman power and to obey the authorities which this power has entrusted with the enforcement of the law. The order created by this law, human society, is consequently the work of the Deity and not of man. If the Lord had not interfered and had not given enlightenment to erring mankind, society would not have come into existence.... The scientific theory as developed by the social philosophy of eighteenth-century rationalism and liberalism and by modern economics does not resort to any miraculous interference of superhuman powers.... Society is a product of human action, i.e., the human urge to remove uneasiness as far as possible. In order to explain its becoming and its evolution it is not necessary to have recourse to a doctrine, certainly offensive to a truly religious mind, according to which the original creation was so defective that reiterated superhuman intervention is needed to prevent its failure.[9]

In other words, "a truly religious mind" is the mind of an eighteenth-century Continental European deist, whose silent, distant God is sufficiently irrelevant to human affairs to satisfy a generous and broad-minded humanistic economist (assuming he is not a follower of Ayn Rand's atheistic "objectivism"—and few economists are).[10]

For Mises, a confirmed utilitarian, "Law and legality, the moral code and social institutions are no longer revered as unfathomable decrees of Heaven. They are of human origin, and the only yardstick that must be applied to them is that of expediency with regard to human welfare."[11] His methodological individualism was grounded in *human expediency*, which somehow (he could not say how) is understood by all men, or at least all *reasonable* men who recognize the value of free market economics and economic growth. In short, economists—*true* economists, meaning defenders of the free market—"have repeatedly emphasized that they deal with socialism and interventionism from the point of view of the generally accepted values of Western

9. *Ibid*., pp. 145–46.

10. Rothbard once remarked concerning the Randians: "They hate God more than they hate the state." For a comprehensive critique of Rand's thought, see John Robbins, *Without a Prayer: Ayn Rand and the Close of Her System* (Unicoi, Tennessee: Trinity Foundation, [1974] 1997).

11. Mises, *Human Action*, p. 147.

civilization."[12] Even a methodological individualist sometimes finds collectives—"the values of Western civilization"—epistemologically indispensable. Sadly, Mises never admitted what should have been obvious, specifically, that he was partially dependent on the epistemological holism that he vociferously rejected.[13]

The idea of representative civil government was basic to nineteenth-century liberalism. Defenders of classical liberalism wanted limited civil government and a free market economy. But there are few strict defenders of the old faith today. Mises and Hayek have few followers in the academic world. Their intellectual heirs are either Christians or outright anarchists. Neither group (a holistic noun) accepts the viewpoint of nineteenth-century classical liberalism.[14] Christians base their views on the Bible, and the anarchists want no civil government—certainly not one which is supported by compulsory taxation.

The empirical or "positive economics" of the Chicago School defends the limited-government viewpoint. These scholars do not appeal to hypothetically universal rights of man that are based on natural law. They explain economics strictly in terms of economic self-interest, and they use scientific tools of "empirical," value-free economic analysis, especially mathematics, which implies some sort of holism (economic aggregates). Mises categorically rejected such holism as an invalid tool for understanding human action. Therefore, the old classical liberalism, with its strict commitment to methodological individualism, is today a shadow of its former moral self.

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12. Mises, *Theory and History: An Interpretation of Social and Economic Evolution* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1969), p. 33. Published originally by Yale University Press in 1957.

13. Gary North, "Economics: From Reason to Intuition," in North (ed.), *Foundations of Christian Scholarship: Essays in the Van Til Perspective* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, 1976), pp. 87–96.

14. It is one of the ironies of recent history that the two main groups that continue to read and quote Mises both reject his utilitarianism. The anarchocapitalists, led by Rothbard, are defenders of natural law theory, and they explicitly reject utilitarianism as a legitimate foundation of social and economic theory: Rothbard, *For a New Liberty*, p. 19. They are anarchists, and Mises explicitly rejected anarchism. He even said that a military draft is sometimes legitimate. In the 1966 Regnery edition of *Human Action, he wrote:* "He who in our age opposes armaments and conscription is, perhaps unbeknown to himself, an abettor of those aiming at the enslavement of all." Mises, *Human Action*, p. 282. The anarchocapitalists seldom go into print against Mises by name, since they are self-professed followers of Mises and Austrian economic theory, but they have abandoned much of his epistemology (he was a selfconscious Kantian dualist, as well as a utilitarian) and his philosophy of limited (rather than zero) civil government. The other group that uses Mises' economic arguments is the Christian Reconstruction movement, whose members reject his humanismagnosticism and his methodological individualism.

Conclusion

The Pharaoh's court magicians warned him. They told him that he was facing God almighty. He did not accept their evaluation, or at least he chose to challenge the God of Moses anyway. Did this protect the families of the magicians? Did they avoid the plagues? Did they escape the death of their firstborn? Not without the blood on the doorposts. Not without an outward covenantal sign indicating that they had placed themselves under the sovereignty of God. They gave the king good advice, but he did not take it, and they did not escape.

When God brought judgment on Egypt, the seemingly innocent Egyptians were not spared. This was because there were no innocent Egyptians. They were all under the Pharaoh's covenant, they all operated in terms of his divinity, and they all felt the wrath of God, in time and on earth. They were doomed because he was doomed. He was their representative in a great confrontation with God, almost as the Philistines were represented by Goliath. The result was the same in each instance: death for the representative, and scattering and defeat for the represented.

Covenants cannot be avoided. Man cannot serve two masters; he serves only one (Matt. 6:24).[15] The system of representative government has been with mankind since the beginning. Adam's heirs cannot escape the results of Adam's choice in the garden. He served as our representative head; his loss was our loss. The Pharaoh's loss was the Egyptian peasant's loss. Men do not stand alone, as independent, totally autonomous entities, facing a cosmos which is impersonal. Though covenant-breaking man would like to believe its conclusion, William Ernest Henley's late-nineteenth-century poem, *Invictus*, proclaimed a false doctrine of man's autonomy. Its concluding lines: "It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul."

Henley is forgotten today, as is his poem, but the last two lines of this stanza are part of the English language, familiar to millions who have never heard of him. Its sentiments were basic to the twentieth century, in which more people died as a result of disastrous decisions by national leaders than in any previous century, with the possible exception of Noah's generation, depending upon the size of that population.

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15. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 14.

9

ORIGINAL OWNERSHIP

> *And Moses said unto him [Pharaoh], As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the* Lord*; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the* Lord*'s. But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the* Lord *God.*
>
> EXODUS 9:29–30

The theocentric principle here is the absolute sovereignty of God, from which is derived absolute ownership by God.

This is not the first statement in Scripture concerning the ownership of the earth. Melchizedek blessed Abram, who was "of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:19b), and Abram used the same phrase, "possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:22b). In that instance, Abram refused to accept any gifts from the king of Sodom, lest the king should say, "I have made Abram rich" (Gen. 14:23b). God's total sovereignty over the earth required Abram to tithe, in this case to the priest Melchizedek (Gen. 14:20).[1] Abram understood that God could legitimately extract His portion from Abram, the steward, even though Abram believed it would be wise to forego the gifts from the king of Sodom. God was to be honored, not Abram. God was to receive the tithe, not Abram. Yet Abram was rich, and he took care to keep the king of Sodom from receiving the credit. God was the source of Abram's wealth, not a pagan earthly king.

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1. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 21.

A. A Defiant Pharaoh

It was different in the case of Pharaoh. He *did* owe a payment to the Israelites. He had challenged Moses and Moses' God. He came before God under a curse. He and his people had enslaved God's people, had broken their covenant with the Israelites, and had burdened them with the requirement to make bricks without straw. Pharaoh had changed his mind repeatedly, breaking each successive promise to Moses concerning the Israelites. Egypt would pay restitution to the Israelites before the exodus. It was not a question of making the Israelites rich. Pharaoh would receive no credit in this regard. The restitution payment was being extracted from the Egyptians by a series of external judgments. Abram refused Sodom's payment, while God demanded Egypt's. Egypt's payment was no gift.

Moses' message to Pharaoh was clear: *God owns the world*. He also controls its operations. Moses reminded Pharaoh of the source of his miseries. The land was in ruins. Egypt had been overtaken by a series of disasters. But Moses' point was that these had not been "natural" disasters. They had been supernatural disasters. To prove his point, he promised to pray to God, and God would then halt the hail and thunderstorms. The *proof* of God's ownership is God's word. He made the world, He made man, and He is sovereign over both man and the world. But to demonstrate His ownership before Pharaoh, God stopped the hail.

His word was sufficient proof. He did not need to verify His word before Pharaoh. Nevertheless, God provided the additional evidence. Yet Moses told Pharaoh that he would not fear God, despite the evidence. Pharaoh's heart was hardened. The evidence did not matter. If he would not listen to God's prophet, he would not assent to the evidence of his eyes. If God's word was insufficient, then the absence of hail would not be sufficient. He would still not fear God. In this sense, he resembled Satan, whom he represented.

Pharaoh never did believe the testimony of his eyes. Right up until the moment when the waters of the Red Sea closed over him, he refused to assent to the obvious. He raced into the arms of death, shouting his defiance against God, breaking his word, and taking the Egyptian state with him. *He refused to believe God's word, so the testimony of his eyes meant nothing*. His operating presupposition was that he, the Pharaoh, was god. God is not the being He claims to be, nor could such a being exist, Pharaoh presupposed. No sovereign, absolute being can lay claim to total control, and therefore original ownership of

everything, he believed. He died for his beliefs. He did not die alone.

God's claim is comprehensive. He possesses absolute property rights to every atom of the universe. He created it, and He owns it. He, unlike man, does not operate in terms of a definition of ownership that requires the right and ability of an owner to disown the property at his discretion.[2] His ownership is original. No other being is absolutely sovereign, so therefore no other being can claim original, uncontested rights to any aspect of the creation. *No other being owns any economic asset that he did not receive from God*. Therefore, no other being can bargain with God to buy any part of the creation. All property is held by means of a transfer of rights from God to the new owner. It is held in terms of a covenant. Men or demons can break their covenant with God, denying the terms of subordinate ownership, but they cannot thereby achieve their goal of final sovereignty. Whatever rights (legal immunities and protections) they possess to buy or sell property, or even to confiscate property, are derivative rights. *Absolute ownership is an incommunicable attribute of God*.

B. Ownership and Sovereignty

God's statement that He owns the earth is an announcement of His total sovereignty. It is therefore a denial of all of the claims of rebellious man against the plan of God. Jesus' parable of the vineyard owner who hired the laborers throughout the day elaborates on the implications of God's ownership. The land owner hires men all day long, at an identical agreed-upon wage, and at the end of the day, each man receives his wage, one penny. The ones who had labored all day complained: those who came late to work received the same wage for a shorter day's work. They ignored the fact that they had no guarantee when they signed on in the morning that the owner would offer anyone employment later in the day. Neither did those who could not find employment that morning. The complainers were ignoring the effects of *uncertainty* on contractual obligations. The owner answers them with questions. First, hadn't they agreed to work for this wage (Matt. 20:13)? Second, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (20:15).[3] Here is the

2. F. A. Harper wrote: "The corollary of the right of ownership is the right of disownership. So if I cannot sell a thing, it is evident that I do not really own it." *Liberty: A Path to Its Recovery* (Irvington, New York: Foundation for Economic Education, 1949), p. 106.

3. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 40.

doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty, but conveyed by Jesus in an economic parable that could be understood by His listeners. God has the right to do what He wants with the whole creation. He owns the earth, just as the owner of a field owns that field. He is sovereign over it. *This is one of the key passages in the New Testament which defends the ethical and legal legitimacy of private property*. If the owner in the parable did not have the right to do what he wanted with his own property, then the meaning of the parable is lost. An individual's personal, private ownership is analogous to God's personal, private ownership of the earth, in eluding the souls of men. Private ownership, not state ownership, is the foundation of the parable. *To challenge the legitimacy of God's delegated sovereignty of private ownership of the means of production is to challenge the doctrine of the original sovereignty of God. Socialism is therefore an innately demonic and evil doctrine*. It is not surprising that the rise of socialism and statism in the West was also accompanied by the rise of philosophies hostile to the sovereignty of God.[4]

C. Pharaoh's Assertion

Pharaoh recognized the implications of this doctrine of God's absolute ownership, and he rejected it. He refused to humble himself before the God of the Israelites. He had no fear of this God, despite God's control over the forces of nature. He rejected the doctrine of God's sovereignty over the affairs of Egypt. He, as a legitimate god, according to Egyptian theology, possessed at least some degree of autonomous sovereignty. He was entitled to the lives and labors of these Hebrews. Any attempt by their God to impose non-negotiable demands on Egypt had to be resisted. To capitulate on this issue would have implied a moral obligation on Pharaoh's part to conform his economic decisions to the law of God. If God owns the whole earth, then each man is merely a steward of God's property, and is therefore morally obligated to administer the original owner's property accord-

4. On the rise of revolutionary socialism and equally revolutionary nationalism—both philosophies of State sovereignty—as religious and extensively occult phenomena, see James Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New York: Basic Books, 1980). I regard this as the single most significant work of historical scholarship to be published in the United States in the post-World War II era. Volume 1 of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* was the most important work overall, in terms of its impact on the thinking of Western intellectuals, forcing them to confront the reality of Soviet civilization. It is not, strictly speaking, a work of historical scholarship, since it forgoes the historian's paraphernalia of footnotes and extensive documentation, although I regard the work as accurate historically. The author has subtitled this work, "An Experiment in Literary Investigation."

ing to His instructions. Pharaoh would have had to acknowledge his position as a subordinate ruler under God, a prince rather than a king. He would not do it.

As Moses had predicted, as soon as the hail and thunder ceased, Pharaoh and his servants resumed their resistance (Ex. 9:34). Their theology acknowledged the possibility of the appearance of a powerful god to challenge Egypt. Any war between states in the ancient world was believed to involve the gods of both nations. The idea that God might own part of the world, or might legitimately have some claim on the Hebrews as a form of His personal property, could be accepted in theory by the Egyptians. What was repugnant to them was the idea that He owned everything, "lock, stock, and barrel," in the traditional English terminology. That left them no bargaining room.

The Hebrews belonged to God, the Egyptians belonged to God, and Egypt belonged to God. God's assault against Egypt was not a form of competition for temporary advantage, God against Pharaoh. His victory was not an instance of a temporarily sovereign invader who might be overcome later, when conditions changed. The same event —the withdrawal of visible judgment—was *interpreted differently* by Moses and Pharaoh. Pharaoh acted as though he believed that God's withdrawal of the plagues was a sign of His weakening, as if cosmic forces or the gods of Egypt had finally begun to repel this invader. He grew arrogant each time a plague ended. Moses had told him that the removal of the hail and thunder was proof of God's continuing sovereignty, proof that the forces of nature are not autonomous, but under the direct administration of God.

D. The Marxists' Dilemma

This incident points to a fundamental problem for all secular economic theory, namely, *the establishment of a point of originating (and therefore final) ownership*. The modern socialist movement, especially Marxism, asserts that all ownership should be collective, and the tools of production should be lodged in the state. Marx's words in Part II of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) do not explicitly establish state ownership, but they deny the rights of private ownership: "In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property."[5] Again, "Capital is a

5. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848), in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, [1969] 1977), I, p. 120.

collective product, and only by the united action of many members, nay, in the last resort, only by the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion. Capital is, therefore, not a personal, it is a social power."[6] At the end of Part II, he argued that under pure communism, class antagonisms will disappear, and therefore the state, as an organ of repression used by the ruling class to suppress the lower classes, will finally disappear. "When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. . . . In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."[7] The "vast association" replaces the state.

This may sound as though Marx was not really in favor of the state as the owner of the tools of production. But how will the "vast association of the whole nation" allocate scarce economic resources, unless either the state or free markets order the decisions of producers? Marx's comment in *The German Ideology* (1845) is of little use: "Modern universal intercourse can be controlled by individuals, therefore, only when controlled by all."[8] Murray Rothbard, an advocate of the zero-state economy, called attention to this confusion in Marx's thinking: "Rejecting private property, especially capital, the Left Socialists were then trapped in an inner contradiction: if the State is to disappear after the Revolution (immediately for Bakunin, gradually 'withering' for Marx), then how is the 'collective' to run its property without becoming an enormous State itself in fact even if not in name? This was the contradiction which neither the Marxists nor the Bakuninists were ever able to resolve."[9]

E. The Anarchists' Dilemma

On the other hand, the libertarians, or anarcho-capitalists, argue that the *individual* is absolutely sovereign over property. Even the settle-

6. *Ibid.*, I, p. 121.
7. *Ibid.*, I, p. 127.
8. Karl Marx, *The German Ideology* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, [1845] 1965), p. 84.
9. Murray N. Rothbard, "Left and Right: The Prospects for Liberty," *Left and Right*, 1 (1965). For a discussion of this problem in Marxism and socialism, see my book, Gary North, *Marx's Religion of Revolution: Regeneration Through Chaos* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1968] 1989), pp. 155–59.

ment of disputes over property rights is to be solved by private organizations. There must be no political authority—no agency possessing a legal monopoly of violence—to suppress private violence. There must be only profit-seeking law courts, meaning courts without the legal authority to issue a subpoena to compel anyone to testify,[10] plus voluntary arbitration organizations and insurance companies.[11]

This raises an important question: How would this mythical libertarian society be different from Marx's mythical association? Neither one is supposed to be a political body, yet both seem to have important attributes of lawful authority. Why wouldn't *For a New Liberty* become Volume I of *For a New Tyranny*, should a warlord society ever be constructed on the original legal foundation of the privatization of violence? How would "purely defensive, profit-seeking" armies be res-trained from tearing a libertarian society apart in their quest for even greater short-run profits than peaceful competition can provide? These questions have proven to be equally as unsolvable, even in theory, as the socialists' problem of allocating scarce economic resources apart from either the state or the free market.

Conclusion

Ultimate sovereignty over economic resources is possessed by God, who delegates to men certain responsibilities over property. Some of these rights are delegated to individuals, who co-operate voluntarily in exchange. Other rights are delegated to the civil government. Associations also possess limited sovereignty: churches, corporations, clubs, charitable associations, educational institutions, and so forth. The law of God recognizes the legitimacy of limited sovereignty in

10. Murray N. Rothbard, *For a New Liberty: The Libertarian Manifesto*, 2nd ed. (Auburn, Alabama: Mises Institute, [1973] 2006), p. 107.

11. Bruno Leoni, *Freedom and the Law* (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1961). Rothbard's review of the book criticizes it for not going far enough: "While Leoni is vague and wavering on the structure that his courts would take, he at least indicates the possibility of privately competing judges and courts. . . . Similarly, while in some passages Leoni accepts the idea of a governmental supreme court which he admits becomes itself a quasilegislature, he does call for the restoration of the ancient practice of separation of government from the judicial function. If for no other reason, Professor Leoni's work is extremely valuable for raising, in our Statebemused age, the possibility of a workable separation of the judicial function from the State apparatus." Rothbard, "On Freedom and the Law," *New Individualist Review*, I (Winter 1962), p. 38. This shortlived journal of the 1960s has also been reprinted in one volume by Liberty Classics. Rothbard went into greater detail concerning his theory of a judicial system in a society without a civil government with the power to impose sanctions, in his book, *For a New Liberty*, pp. 275–90.

many forms of organization, but none of them is regarded as absolutely sovereign over all spheres of life, or even in any given sphere. Fathers may not legally murder infants; churches may not embezzle funds; civil governments may not confiscate private property without due process of law. God, however, can do anything He wants, as the experiences of both Pharaoh and Job indicate. *God's total control is correlative to God's absolute ownership*.

To unravel the complex intertwining of the various spheres, in order to obtain the proper idea of the limits on the sovereignty of any or all of them, we need to search out the terms and implications of biblical law. Without the concrete examples of Old Testament law, which are seen as morally binding throughout history, men are left without any reliable guide to balance competing claims of all the self-proclaimed sovereign owners, or even admittedly derivative owners, assuming no one knows which group is sovereign in any given instance.

Those who reject the idea that biblical law governs property rights, and who also recognize the evil of attributing absolute sovereignty either to the civil government or the autonomous individual, have a distressing tendency to substitute platitudes for analysis. We hear phrases like, "We're neither socialists nor free market capitalists." Fine; then what are they? Medieval guild socialists? Keynesian interventionists? Social credit advocates? Henry Georgists? "Ordo" liberals (followers of Wilhelm Röpke)? What analytical tool kit do they use to interpret the economy? What are their first principles and logical developments?

It is the task of Christian economists to discover basic biblical principles and case-law applications that offer a framework of responsible, subordinate ownership. They must discover biblical laws of stewardship. They must discover a means of analysis that enables people to understand economic causation.

Pharaoh could not, or at least he did not, and the Egypt of his day perished.

10

TOTAL SACRIFICE, TOTAL SOVEREIGNTY

And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you.

EXODUS 10:24

The theocentric principle here is God as totally separate from His creation: *transcendence*, point one of the biblical covenant.[1] He establishes a series of separating covenants with those whom He chooses to become His representatives: point two of the biblical covenant. This system of judicial representation is hierarchical.[2]

A. Negotiations

Pharaoh at this point was a battered despot. His original inflexibility was becoming more pliant, at least on the surface. When Moses first came before Pharaoh to request a time for sacrifice to God, Pharaoh absolutely rejected his request (Ex. 5:2). He denied knowing the God whom Moses spoke about. He punished the Hebrews by withdrawing the state-supplied straw for their brick-making. He retained his self-confident prohibition through four plagues: the Nile's transformation into blood, the frogs (after which he temporarily capitulated), the lice, and the swarms of insects.

Pharaoh then called Moses and informed him that it would be all right if the Israelites sacrificed in the land of Egypt (Ex. 8:25). Moses rejected the offer with the argument that lawful sacrifice involved

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 1. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch.1.

2. Sutton, ch. 2. North, ch. 2.

the sacrifice of an animal that was an abomination in the sight of the Egyptians (Ex. 8:26). This probably meant sheep, since the profession of shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians (Gen. 46:34). So, Pharaoh backed down some more: they could go into the wilderness, but not too far away (Ex. 8:28). He would not permit them to travel a full three days' journey, as Moses requested (Ex. 8:27). Pharaoh again reversed himself and refused to allow them to go (Ex. 8:32). Then came three more plagues: dying cattle, boils, and hail (Ex. 9).

At this point, Moses came and announced the imminence of another plague: locusts. Pharaoh's response to Moses and also to his own advisors was a compromise that was, in reality, the same old stubbornness. The New American Standard Bible's translation is far more clear than the King James: "And Pharaoh's servants said to him, 'How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?'" So, Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God! Who are the ones who are going?" And Moses said, "We shall go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD." Then he said unto them, "Thus may the LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Take heed, for evil is in your mind" (Ex. 10:7–10).

God then brought the plague of locusts upon Egypt. Pharaoh repented, asked Moses to remove them, and then once again forbade them to depart. Next, God brought thick darkness upon Egypt. "And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you" (Ex. 10:24). Moses again rejected this compromise: "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God, until we come thither" (Ex. 10:26). The next verse repeats the familiar theme: "But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go." Pharaoh then sent Moses and Aaron away permanently (Ex. 10:28).

What was in Pharaoh's mind? A probable explanation is this: *Pharaoh wanted to tie the Hebrews to an anchor*. At first, he did not want them to travel anywhere or sacrifice to any other God. Then he was willing to have them travel a little distance, just out of sight of the Egyptian people (Ex. 8:28). This way, Egypt's army could put them under surveillance, and if they tried to escape, the army could easily get to them in time to pull them back. A three days' journey would

have given them too great a head start. Moses was unwilling to capitulate. So, Pharaoh and his counselors came up with the idea of letting only the males go to sacrifice. Again, Moses was uncooperative. So, Pharaoh counter-offered: "All right, how about this? All the people go, but not the animals. Leave your capital here." Unacceptable, said Moses.

B. Non-Negotiable Demands

What we see is a conflict between two very stubborn men. Pharaoh appeared to be the more "reasonable." After all, hadn't he retreated from his original prohibition? Hadn't he tried his best to work out a solution? True, it took two or three plagues each time to convince him to make a counter-offer to Moses, but he always seemed to repent. But Moses—what an ideologue! He refused to budge. He had to have it all. He kept making non-negotiable demands. All the people had to go. All the animals had to go. They had to go three days' journey away from Goshen. They had to be out of sight of the Egyptians. Moses, as God's representative, did not choose to work out a compromise. It was "all or nothing" with Moses: *all for the Israelites and, if Pharaoh remained obstinate, nothing for the Egyptians*. Pharaoh's advisors saw this clearly: "Egypt is destroyed," they reminded Pharaoh. Little did they suspect just how destroyed Egypt would shortly become.

The Bible's account is equally uncompromising: it was Pharaoh, not Moses, who had his heart actively hardened by God. Yet Moses appears to be the uncompromising representative in this battle of the wills. Why should Moses seem so rigid to modern readers? The modern world, with its presupposition of relativism, has a tendency to regard compromise as an almost universal benefit. "You go along to get along," is an old saying in the United States Senate.[3] Speaker of the House of Representatives Sam Rayburn made it famous.[4] You compromise. You rise above your principles. You make a deal.

Moses stood with God. He asked for a few days to sacrifice to God—*a comprehensive sacrifice* that would have involved the whole of Israel: men, women, children, and animals. All of them would be separated from their earthly captors. All of them would be outside the direct sovereign control of the Egyptian state. In short, they would be utterly under the dominion of God, and visibly so.

3. William Safire, *Safire's Political Dictionary* (New York: Ballentine, 1978), p. 303.

4. Anthony Champagne, *Congressman Sam Rayburn* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1984), p. 161.

They did not propose to escape. When Moses asked Pharaoh to "let my people go," he was not asking him to give up control of God's people. At least, Moses did not ask this directly. But when he came to a self-proclaimed god, the ruler of a supposedly divine state, there could be no question about what was implied by his request. He was asking Pharaoh to revoke an area of his self-proclaimed total sovereignty in Egypt. He was asking Pharaoh to announce that the continuity of being between him and the gods of Egypt was in fact not a divine continuity at all, that there is a God who is higher, and who commands the sacrifices of a slave population. *Moses was asking Pharaoh to make a symbolic commitment to God.* Pharaoh was to admit to everyone that he held power over the Israelites by permission from the God of Israel, and that this foreign God had the authority to compel Egypt to suspend all signs of its sovereignty over Israel for several days, perhaps a week. (The phrase, "three days' journey," may have meant a round-trip of three days, or three days out and three days back, although the latter seems more plausible: Ex. 5:3.) Pharaoh had to put the Israelites on their "good behavior," relying on their sense of justice to return to bondage. To have done so would have meant abandoning his role as absolute sovereign.

What if he had agreed to Moses' request? The Israelites had not requested freedom. God had not instructed Moses to call for a permanent release from Egypt. God had told Moses that He intended to lead them out of Egypt on a permanent basis (Ex. 3:8), but He did not instruct Moses to demand their release. Moses was only to request a week or less of freedom. God promised: "And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand" (Ex. 3:19), or as the New English Bible puts it, "unless he is compelled." Why was God so certain? Because He intended to control Pharaoh's decisions: ". . . and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of the land" (Ex. 11:10). God's active hardening of Pharaoh's heart was basic to His promise to deliver Israel permanently: "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments" (Ex. 7:3–4).

C. The Question of Sovereignty

God demands absolute commitment from all creatures. Pharaoh, who was believed by the Egyptians to be an absolute sovereign, only needed to proclaim his partial sovereignty in order to challenge God's claim of total sovereignty. All he needed to do was to retain a token sovereignty over Israel to make his claim valid. If the children stayed, or the wives stayed, or the animals stayed, then the Israelites were symbolically acknowledging the legitimate divine sovereignty of the Egyptian state. If they would sacrifice inside Egypt's borders, or at least not too far into the wilderness, then God's claim of total sovereignty would be successfully challenged. If Pharaoh could extract even the tiniest token of symbolic sovereignty, then God's claim to the whole of the lives of all the Israelites would be invalidated. In other words, if Pharaoh, as a self-proclaimed divinity, could extract a sign of his sovereignty from another self-proclaimed divinity, *then neither of them could claim full sovereignty*.

Pharaoh's strategy implicitly admitted that he was not fully sovereign. Full sovereignty had been his initial claim, but the plagues had beaten him down. By now, he was willing to accept partial sovereignty, for that would pull the God of the Israelites down to his level, or at least low enough to re-establish the theology of the continuity of being. He could acknowledge that the God of the Israelites was a powerful God, even more powerful than Pharaoh, *at that point in time*. Both of them would then be gods, both striving to overcome the external world, both with limitations, both willing to deal with each other as sovereign beings possessing the same fundamental being. *This would preserve Egypt's theology of the continuity of being*. This would sanction Pharaoh's position as the highest representative in Egypt of the gods. If Moses would compromise, as the authorized representative of his God, then Pharaoh could achieve a theological victory in principle: the God of the Israelites would thereby cede him lawful authority, in time and on earth, as a full-fledged god, who possessed the right to demand and receive concessions from Israel's God. Had Moses capitulated, with God's acquiescence, Pharaoh would have successfully challenged God's claim of total sovereignty, His claim that He was the only God to whom Israel owed total obedience, and who therefore had the right to demand total sacrifice from His people, leaving no outward symbol of original, primary sovereignty over them for Pharaoh to display.

D. Implicit Statism

Pharaoh, at the end of his attempts to bargain with Moses and Moses' God, was hoping to extract at least token control over the terms of Israel's sacrifice. He wanted to retain at least one sign of his sovereignty over their worship. If God had capitulated to Pharaoh on this point, He would thereby have acknowledged Pharaoh's lawful authority to grant to the Israelites their right to worship. *The Egyptian state would then have become the earthly, institutional source of religious rights*, because God Himself had been compelled to accede to at least one of the terms Pharaoh had laid down. This would have made the state the final institutional authority on the question of the nature of legitimate worship. *The needs of the state would have become the criteria for external worship*. By extracting from God even the tiniest compromise, this self-proclaimed god of a divine state would have been sanctioned as the *final earthly authority concerning religion*, and also the source of the rights of religion. God would thereby have acknowledged the legitimacy of Egypt's prior claim of lawful authority over the religious affairs of the Israelites. God would thereby have acknowledged the right of Pharaoh to retain at least token authority, which meant the right of Pharaoh and his heirs to compete with God at any time in the future for total authority. The God of the Hebrews might eventually be compelled to give back to the state what the state had originally claimed.

Pharaoh had rejected Moses' initial request because he had believed that he possessed total authority. At each stage, he gave up something, but he never was willing to give up everything. He was willing to relinquish some of his authority temporarily, for as long as God brought the plagues. However, should God change His mind, or lose power, or forget the Israelites, then Pharaoh might be able to re-establish his claim of total sovereignty. Pharaoh viewed this contest as a sort of cosmological "tug of war," in which he retained lawful authority of at least one end of the rope. God might pull him close to the line temporarily, but one end was rightfully his. If God would simply acknowledge Pharaoh's right to his end by allowing him the right to set any of the terms of Hebrew sacrifice, then Pharaoh's case would not be completely destroyed. If he bided his time, the God of the Hebrews might go away, leaving Pharaoh with the whole rope.

If the state can establish a foothold—even a temporary toehold — of autonomous sovereignty, then it has established a lawful claim to as much sovereignty as it can gain through the imposition of raw power.

God's claim to absolute, uncompromised sovereignty is successfully challenged by man whenever God is forced to surrender even token autonomous sovereignty to man. Only if God's sovereignty is absolute can God claim to be the sole source of meaning and power in the universe. It is fallen man's goal to share some of that sovereignty. It is also Satan's goal, even if man becomes, temporarily, the holder of any fraction of this original, autonomous sovereignty, for if Satan can demonstrate that man has any final (or original) sovereignty whatsoever, then God's claim of total sovereignty collapses, which is the very essence of Satan's challenge to God. Satan can collect from man whatever sovereignty man might snatch from God, given the fact of Satan's greater power; but he must first place man in the same continuity of being with God. This attempt is always futile, from Genesis to Revelation.

E. No Compromise

God refused to grant Pharaoh anything. He rejected the seemingly reasonable compromises offered to Him by this self-proclaimed god, this ruler of a supposedly divine state. God hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he might not capitulate and let the Israelites journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to God. Pharaoh is the great historical example in Scripture of Proverbs 21:1: "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." Yet Pharaoh was totally responsible for his acts. In great wrath, he challenged God, and God killed the firstborn of Egypt. Then the Egyptians expelled the Israelites in great fear, allowing them not merely a week of freedom to sacrifice to God, but permanent freedom to sacrifice to God. The Egyptians fulfilled God's promise to Moses, that the whole nation of Israel would go free and claim the land of Canaan (Ex. 3:8). God gave them total victory, yet Moses had officially requested only, at most, a week's freedom to sacrifice. However, *this sacrifice was comprehensive*: every man, woman, child, and beast had to go three days' journey into the wilderness.

Pharaoh, unwilling to acknowledge the validity of this claim upon the whole of Israel, because it would have denied absolute sovereignty on his part and on the part of the Egyptian state, resisted unto death. He could not allow Israel a week of freedom, a week of rest, a week in which no tokens of subservience to Egypt's gods would be adhered to by the Israelites. He realized that all the claims of absolute authority on the part of Egypt would be refuted by such a capitulation on his

part. Therefore, he hardened his heart, hoping to preserve the theology of Egypt and the autonomous sovereignty of man. When the Israelites left triumphantly, he lashed out against them, in a suicidal attempt to destroy them or drag them back. God had not compromised with him; the all-or-nothing claim of God could not be sacrificed by some token acknowledgment of lawful Egyptian sovereignty.

Pharaoh recognized the nature of God's total rejection of his claims to divinity, the absolute denial of the continuity of being. God had cut away his claim to divinity in front of his people and the kings of the earth, just as He had promised (Ex. 9:16). Pharaoh preferred to risk his own death, the destruction of his army, and the captivity of Egypt, rather than submit meekly to the triumph of the Israelites. He bet and lost. As such, Pharaoh's experience is archetypal for all the societies of Satan. They all make the same bet; they all lose. The only exception in the Bible was the case of the Gibeonites. They tricked the Israelites into making a covenant with them. By becoming permanent slaves to the Hebrews, they thereby acknowledged the sovereignty of God (Josh. 9).

Conclusion

The state is not absolutely sovereign. There is no divine right of kings, irrespective of what they say or do. There was no way for Moses to deal with Pharaoh on Egypt's terms without compromising the sovereignty of God. Moses refused to compromise. The state is not the source of the right (duty) of religious worship; God is. The state may *acknowledge* the right (duty) of men to worship God by providing a legal code or bill of rights, but the state is not the source of this right. This right cannot be revoked unilaterally by state officials without bringing into play the vengeance of God. To acknowledge the permanent right (duty) of men to sacrifice to God is to acknowledge the comprehensive and absolute sovereignty of God—an original sovereignty, a final sovereignty, and a primary sovereignty, which is all one fundamental sovereignty. *All human sovereignty is secondary; it is a derivative sovereignty*. It is, above all, a completely accountable sovereignty, in terms of which every individual will be judged, and in terms of which every institution is also judged, in time and on earth (Deut. 8; 28).

11

SEPARATION AND DOMINION

> *But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how the* Lord *doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.*
>
> EXODUS 11:7

God announced that there was a radical covenantal difference between the Hebrews and the Egyptians. This difference was about to be manifested in a sharp break historically: the exodus. So great was this difference, that no dog would lick its lips (literal translation: sharpen its tongue) at the Hebrews upon their departure from Egypt. No dog would eat any Hebrew, as dogs later ate Jezebel, the result of God's special curse (II Kings 9:36). The Egyptians now respected them and their leader, Moses. "And the Lord gave the people favour in the land of Egypt, in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people" (Ex. 11:3). The meaning was clear: the Hebrews would leave victorious, having seen their enemies so thoroughly defeated, that not one of them would raise a cry against them. No jeering crowds would force them to "run the gauntlet," throwing rocks or garbage at them as they departed. The Egyptians believed in the continuity of being, and Moses had vanquished the representative of Egypt's gods, who himself was believed to be divine. Were not the Hebrews linked to that victorious God, through Moses?

A. Egypt vs. Israel

Consider the exodus from the point of view of a citizen of Egypt or one of the Canaanitic nations. A slave population had successfully

challenged the dominant political order of its day. Egypt's wealth and power, even in decline (if Courville's chronology of the dynasties is correct), were recognized throughout the ancient world. Yet Egypt could not bring these Hebrews into submission. The ancient world viewed a military defeat as a defeat for the gods of the vanquished city-state. What a defeat for the gods of Egypt! A slave population had risen up, under the very noses of the Egyptians, and had smashed the political order. So complete was this victory, that the invading Hyksos (Amalekites) swept over Egypt without encountering military resistance. God had been so victorious over Egypt that His people did not even bother to remain in the land as conquerors. So contemptuous of Egypt were the Hebrews that they marched out, leaving the spoils of war to the Amalekites, who were being replaced in Canaan by the Hebrews.[1] Here was a God so great, that He did not even bother to subdue the land of Egypt. And now, the Canaanites knew, these people were coming for them. Is it any wonder that they trembled for a generation (Josh. 2:9–11)?

The division between Egypt and Israel was assured. The Hebrews could not be tricked back into submission. Egyptians would not be able to subdue them, as vanquished populations sometimes do, by intermarrying, nor would the Hebrews absorb Egyptian religion and culture by intermarrying. The religious and linguistic separation would be maintained permanently, since God was taking them out of Egypt and was preparing to displace the Canaanites. The Canaanites knew what was in store for them (Josh. 2:9–11). Israel took no prisoners (Josh. 6:21). Israel, if the people remained faithful to their God, would annihilate the Canaanites.

> When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an

1. Immanuel Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1952), ch. 2.

> holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth (Deut. 7:1–6).[2]

There was a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. That difference was God. He had made a covenant with them. They had been a tiny nation; now they would be victorious. They had already been so victorious over Egypt that Egypt's dogs recognized it; they would not lick their chops at Israelites. Yet it had not been their strength which had led them to freedom. "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Deut. 7:7–8). It was God's choice, not theirs, to redeem them—to buy them back by destroying their enemies. It was God's choice when He had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham for his seed. It was God's choice when He had selected Moses as their leader. It was God's choice to harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not compromise and permit the Hebrews to go and sacrifice to their God. God had done it all, and God would continue to do it all, if they remained faithful to His covenant.

God's covenant with Israel was the great dividing sword. It was the dividing line between Israel and Egypt. Israel received its blessings; Egypt received its curse. It was also the dividing line between Israel and the nations of Canaan. It separated Egypt from Israel, and it was to serve as a means of destruction in Canaan. God had separated Israel from Egypt geographically; He planned to separate Israel and the tribes of Canaan biologically: the Canaanites would all die. The Canaanites recognized this, according to Rahab (Josh. 2:9–11).

Among the Hebrews of Moses' day, only Joshua and Caleb recognized the commitment of God to give His people total victory, in time and in Canaan (Num. 14).[3] The Hebrews of Moses' era did not

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2. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 17. It should be obvious that pacifism as a moral philosophy has no support in the Bible. The same God who was incarnate in Jesus Christ ordered the Hebrews to annihilate the Canaanites. Any discussion by God-fearing people of the legitimacy of warfare from a biblical standpoint must begin with a consideration and moral acceptance of these verses.

3. A similar incident took place a millennium and a half later, when the Jews and Romans had a stone rolled across Jesus' tomb, in order to keep His disciples from tak-

recognize the inevitability of their impending victory. They had not recognized the nature of their victory over the Egyptians. They did not understand the nature of the God who had given them freedom, nor did they understand the nature of the ethical covenant which He had set before them. They had to serve Him continuously. They chose to serve other gods intermittently. They were supposed to exercise dominion continuously. They chose to exercise dominion intermittently. They were supposed to be victorious continuously. They were defeated intermittently.

B. The Covenant and Separation

The covenant is the means by which God separates His people from the world. It is supposed to be the means by which his people bring the world into conformity with biblical law. He shows grace to His people and gives them the tool of dominion, His law-order. This separation finally results in the *permanent separation* between God and His enemies, on the day of judgment. *Eternity is marked by this covenantal separation*.

God separated His people from the surrounding cultures in the Old Testament era. He separated Noah from the pre-Flood world. He separated Abram from both Ur of the Chaldees and Haran. He separated Israel from Canaan during Israel's sojourn in Egypt. He separated Israel from Egypt's masses by putting them in Goshen. He separated Israel from Egypt completely at the time of the exodus. All of these separations were essentially separations from pagan gods and pagan cultures. But these separations did not imply retreat and impotence. These separations were established by God in *Israel's history* in order to give God's people confidence concerning Israel's future. The *covenantal separation from other nations* established the possibility and the requirement of *Israel's dominion* over those nations. Israel wiped out most of the Canaanites, and Israel was supposed to wipe out, or drive out, all of them. *God had prepared for His people a new training ground, a type of paradise, a land flowing with milk and honey (covenant feast), which pointed back to the garden of Eden and forward to the new heavens and new earth*. This land had been cleared of wild beasts, except for relatively few of them (Ex. 23:28–29), and Israel's victory cleared the land of most of the wild cultures.[4] It was to have been a

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ing His body and claiming that His prophecy concerning His resurrection had been fulfilled; meanwhile, the disciples scattered to the winds in selfimposed defeat.

4. Joshua 10:21 reads: "And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Me-

theological, cultural, and political *clean sweep*. Israel was to take the land by force, and this land was to become the base of operations in a mighty conquest, fueled by a population explosion and compound economic growth, which was to have carried God's dominion across the face of the earth. To fulfill the terms of the dominion covenant, God's redeemed people must separate themselves ethically from Satan's unredeemed people.

The separation of God's people from ethical rebels is a permanent separation. Heaven does not eventually fuse with hell. The new heavens and the new earth do not eventually merge into the lake of fire. The residents of the new heavens and new earth rule eternally (Rev. 21; 22); the residents of the lake of fire are subjected to endless defeat (Rev. 20:14–15). The people of God are separated from the ethical rebels on a permanent basis after the final judgment, and this final separation brings with it *absolute dominion*. It is the final victory of God over Satan, and it involves the permanent dominion of man over the creation. The rebels are killed, for they suffer the second, permanent death (Rev. 20:14). *Covenantal separation therefore implies covenantal dominion*.

This necessary relationship was never meant to be postponed until the day of judgment. It is supposed to be progressively worked out, in time and on earth.[5] *God's separation* of Abram from his people, of Abraham's seed from the other nations, of Israel from Egypt, and of Israel from all the religious traditions of Canaan, all required *action by His covenanted people, in time and on earth*. Abram left Ur and Haran, and he circumcised Isaac. Similarly, Moses challenged Pharaoh. Israel did not stay in Egypt. Israel did not wander in the wilderness forever. *Israel fought and won, in history, in terms of God's separating covenant, which is a dominion covenant*. These mighty acts of God were designed to convince Israel of the necessity of remaining true to the covenant. The prophets kept returning to these historical acts of God in the life of Israel, especially the delivery from Egypt (I Sam. 8:8; Isa. 11:16; Jer. 2:6; Hos. 13:4). So did Stephen in his sermon (Acts 7). *Men's separation from Satan and his works is to bring them dominion over*

kkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel." Literally, this can be translated: "Not (he) sharpened (his) tongue against a man." It seems to refer back to Exodus 11:7, meaning that no Israelites died in battle.

5. I use this phrase repeatedly in my writings. It refers to human history prior to the second coming of Christ at the final judgment) and therefore prior to the establishment of a sinfree world after the resurrection. It is easier to use the phrase than continually search for substitute phrases.

Satan and his works: in politics, economics, military affairs, art, medicine, science, and every other area of human action.

C. Ancient Humanism's Separation

Basic to many of the ancient cultures was the distinction between "the people," the group to which a citizen belonged, and "the others," or "barbarians," who were outside the covenantal membership. Egypt was no exception. Wilson commented: "In their feeling of special election and special providence, the Egyptians called themselves 'the people' in contrast to foreigners."[6] So deeply embedded in Greek and Roman thought was the division between peoples, that classical legal theory recognized no common law within the city.[7] Fustel wrote:

> No one could become a citizen at Athens, if he was a citizen in another city; for it was a religious impossibility to be at the same time a member of two cities, as it also was to be a member of two families. One could not have two religions at the same time. . . . Neither at Rome nor at Athens could a foreigner be a proprietor. He could not marry; or, if he married, his marriage was not recognized, and his children were reputed illegitimate. He could not make a contract with a citizen; at any rate, the law did not recognize such a contract as valid. . . . The Roman law forbade him to inherit from a citizen, and even forbade a citizen to inherit from him. They pushed this principle so far, that if a foreigner obtained the rights of a citizen without his son, born before this event, obtaining the same favor, the son became a foreigner in regard to his father, and could not inherit from him. The distinction between citizen and foreigner was stronger than the natural tie between father and son.[8]

There was also the linguistic difference. The very term "barbarian" has its origins in Greek grammar. The Greeks spoke Greek, of course, while foreigners' languages all sounded like "bar bar"—incoherent, in other words. This, at least, is the standard explanation of the term, and it is repeated by the influential British historian of classical culture, H. D. F. Kitto, in the introduction to his book, *The Greeks* (1951). Both Kitto and C. M. Bowra argued that "barbarian" did not have a pejorative sense in Homer, but later the term came to mean inferior

6. John A. Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt: An Interpretation of Ancient Egyptian Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1951] 1967), p. 112.

7. Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, [1864] 1955), Bk. III, ch. XI, pp. 192–93.

8. *Ibid.*, III:XII, pp. 196–97.

status.[9] Gilbert Murray, whose *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (1925) is regarded as a classic, said that we can mark the origin of classical Greece with the advent of the cultural distinction between the Greek and the barbarian, when the Greek historian Herodotus could write that "the Hellenic race was marked off from the barbarian, as more intelligent and more emancipated from silly nonsense."[10] By the middle of the fifth century, B.C., the difference between Greek and barbarian, in the minds of the Greeks, was enormous.

We see the linguistic origin of the word "barbarian" in Paul's comments on tongues in the church. "Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me" (I Cor. 14:11). Again, in Romans 1:14: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians. . . ." Paul, however, did not distinguish between Greeks and barbarians in terms of their innate differences, but only in terms of linguistic differences.

D. The Ethical Disunity of Man

The unity of man, which was assumed and announced architecturally at the tower of Babel, had been shattered by God when He confounded their language and scattered them. God's restraint on the creation of a one-state world brought freedom to men—freedom to develop personally and culturally. Yet it also brought audible distinctions between men. Linguistic distinctions, at least in literate cultures, resist alterations, and even when linguistic changes occur, the written records of the past draw men's thoughts and commitment back to a once-distinct past. It was no accident that the perceived international unity of the Roman Catholic Church was maintained for centuries by the Latin Mass, and it was also not accidental that the historically unprecedented disruptions within that church, which took place from the mid-1960s onward, were intimately related to the successful efforts of the church's religious liberals in abolishing the use of the Latin Mass.

Religious humanists sometimes have attacked this kind of division between men. Ludwig Feuerbach was one example. His book, *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), created a sensation, and converted a whole

9. H. D. F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, [1951] 1962), pp. 8–10; C. M. Bowra, *The Greek Experience* (New York: Mentor, [1957] 1964), p. 26.

10. Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, [1925] 1955), p. 38.

generation of European intellectuals to atheism. Frederick Engels, Marxism's co-founder, remarked once that "One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it. Enthusiasm was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians."[11] In this book, Feuerbach attacked Christianity's concept of saved and lost. Such a view of man separates men from other men. Yet man is a unified whole, a species being. In fact, Feuerbach said, God is really nothing more than man's own thoughts, projected into the religious consciousness of men. "God is the human being; but he presents himself to the religious consciousness as a distinct being."[12] The Christian denies that man is God, and this is unforgivable. Even worse, Christians say that some men will be saved by God, and others will not be saved. "To believe, is synonymous with goodness; not to believe, with wickedness. Faith, narrow and prejudiced, refers all unbelief to the moral disposition. In its view the unbeliever is an enemy to Christ out of obduracy, out of wickedness. Hence faith has fellowship with believers only; unbelievers it rejects. It is well-disposed towards believers, but ill-disposed towards unbelievers. *In faith there lies a malignant principle*."[13]

Marx and Engels, his most famous converts, rejected Feuerbach's brand of non-divisive humanism. They saw the "illusion" of God as a product of a deliberate lie: a weapon used by capitalists to suppress the proletariat. The problem is class divisions; the solution is class warfare, with the proletariat finally emerging victorious over the bourgeoisie.[14] They called for unconditional surrender by the bourgeoisie; they called for all-out warfare. They predicted absolute victory. They saw that true victory over evil involves triumph, in time and on earth.[15] They saw that there must be a self-awareness on the part of the "vanguard" of history, the proletariat, concerning the irreconcilable differences between them and their class enemies, the bourgeoisie.[16] They substituted the forces of dialectical, materialistic

11. Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy" (1888), in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works,* 3 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, [1969] 1977), III, p. 344.

12. Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (New York: Harper Torchbooks, [1841] 1957), p. 247.

13. *Ibid*., p. 252. Emphasis in original.

14. Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848), in *Selected Works*, I, pp. 125–26.

15. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010).

16. "All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority. The proletariat,

history for the providence of God, thereby preserving *an eschatology of victory*.[17] They saw that there must be separation in order to achieve victory. To that extent, Marxism adheres to a humanistic variant of a fundamental doctrine of the Bible. It is one reason why the Marxists have been so successful in promoting their imitation gospel in the twentieth century.

Conclusion

It was Israel's continuing refusal to break with the theology and culture of Egypt as such which condemned that first generation to a life of wandering in the wilderness. It was not the covenantal separation from Egypt which resulted in Israel's wilderness journey. God did not bring Israel into the wilderness to die. This was the accusation of the rebels against Moses, time after time (Ex. 14:11–12; 16:3), so they all died in the wilderness. Their children, led by Joshua and Caleb —two men who had understood the nature of God and His covenant—took possession of the land. It was Satan's lie that covenantal separation from "establishment civilization"—first from Egypt, and later from the remains of the Canaanitic cultures—meant historical defeat and impotence for Israel. This same lie was one of the most important factors in Satan's success against the church in the twentieth century. Whenever this lie becomes the dominant opinion among God's covenanted people, they can expect to die in the wilderness, just as the complainers and defeatists of Moses' day also died in the wilderness.

Christians must also recognize that *the defeat of complainers and defeatists in one generation does not necessarily condemn the next generation to a similar defeat*. When men recognize the optimistic nature of God's separating covenant, and when they seek to work out the terms of God's law-order in their various spheres of influence and responsibility, they will discover the impotence of God's enemies, even as Joshua and 85-year-old Caleb discovered it. Their *separation by God* implies their *victory with God*, in eternity but also in history. Furthermore, with respect to the enemies of God, their *separation from God* leads directly to their *defeat by God*, not only throughout eternity, but in time and on earth. Their eventual defeat by the people of God—those who honor

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the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air." *Communist Manifesto*, in *Selected Works*, I, p. 118.

17. F. N. Lee, *Communist Eschatology: A Christian Philosophical Analysis of the Post-Capitalistic Views of Marx, Engels, and Lenin* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1974).

the terms of God's separating covenant—in time and on earth is an earnest (down payment) of their coming eternal defeat. *Without biblical law, men become progressively impotent culturally*.[18]

When God separates His people from the world by means of His separating covenant, He provides them with the means of external victory, not simply their individualistic internal victory over personal sin. As God progressively separates His people in terms of their conformity to His law, He thereby gives them their tool of dominion.

The dogs of Egypt had more understanding of this fact than did the fleeing slaves of Moses' day. The dogs of Egypt had a better understanding of the implications of God's covenantal partition than fundamentalism's hordes of self-proclaimed experts in biblical prophecy. The dogs of Egypt may have whetted their tongues, but if they ate anyone, it was dead Egyptians, not dead Hebrews.

18. Gary North, "Common Grace, Eschatology, and Biblical Law," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, III (Winter 1976–77). Cf. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987).

12

DISCONTINUITY AND CONTINUITY IN SOCIAL CHANGE

> *And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the* LORD*'s passover.*
>
> EXODUS 12:10–11

The theocentric principle here is the centrality of God's deliverance of His people in history. Deliverance is always hierarchical: God delivers His people. This is point two of the biblical covenant: *hierarchy*.[1] The deliverance of the exodus was a manifestation of the principle of discontinuity, which is an application of the biblical doctrine of *sanctions*: point four of the biblical covenant.[2]

A. Social Progress

Any social philosophy that does not contain an explicit concept of social progress is incapable of producing the kinds of cultural transformations that are required by the dominion covenant (Gen. 1:26–28).[3] Without faith in the possibility of escape from an individual's familiar failures in the present, a person has no legitimate hope in the future. Extending this principle of faith from the individual to the social or-

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1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 2.

2. Sutton, ch. 4. North, ch. 4.

3. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), chaps. 3, 4.

der, without a belief in the possibility of social progress, people are left without one of the fundamental motivating factors necessary for building and maintaining a civilization.[4] Faith in the possibility of both personal and social deliverance *in* history, as well as final deliverance *out of* history, must be widespread if history is ever to be re-shaped by the gospel, as required by the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20).[5] *There is no neutral safety zone for sin or sinners anywhere in time and on earth. Redemption is comprehensive.*[6]

Is social progress possible? If so, is it attained through a series of revolutions, or is it marked by slow, cumulative change? In short, is progress discontinuous or continuous? Or is it some mixture of the two? This fundamental question has divided social philosophers in Western history.[7] This question was the crucial philosophical dividing line between the revolutionaries of France in 1789–94 and the conservative doctrines of Edmund Burke.[8] Modern conservatism can be dated from the publication of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). The question of continuity vs. revolution was also the heart of the 150-year dispute between Marxism and all non-revolutionary social philosophies.[9]

The Bible provides the basis of the correct answer to this fundamental social question. The key factor is *ethics*: point three of the biblical covenant.[10] But ethics in biblical theology is always linked to God's *sanctions*, both in history (Deut. 28)[11] and eternity (Rev. 20). Whether a society experiences long-term progress or catastrophic external judgments that produce discontinuous social change depends

4. See Robert A. Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), especially the Epilogue.

5. Kenneth L. Gentry, *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

6. Gary North, "Comprehensive Redemption: A Theology of Social Action," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, VIII (Summer 1981). Reprinted in Gary North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988), Appendix C.

7. It was not a topic of discussion in classical philosophy, for neither the Greeks nor the Romans believed in long-term progress. They debated the nature of social change, but not social progress.

8. Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: from Burke to Santayana* (Chicago: Regnery, 1953), ch. 2; Nisbet, *The Social Philosophers: Community and Conflict in Western Thought* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973), pp. 265–80.

9. Gary North, *Marx's Religion of Revolution: Regeneration Through Chaos* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1968] 1989), ch. 3.

10. Sutton, *That You May Prosper*, ch. 3.

11. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 69.

on the ethical condition of those who compose the society, especially the religious and political leaders.

The Book of Exodus provides the archetype of all discontinuous social events, which is why the story of the exodus initially appeals to revolutionaries, "liberation theologians," and other proponents of humanistic confrontations between "the exploited poor" and the "exploiting rich."[12] But the revelational ethical framework that the Bible presents gives no support for the dreams and schemes of social revolutionaries.

B. Promise and Deliverance

To understand the biblical concept of social change, we must understand the theology of Passover.

God promised to pass over all the households in Egypt that had blood sprinkled on the doorposts (Ex. 12:13). He would allow the destroyer (Ex. 12:23) to enter all other homes, bringing death to the firstborn male of both man and beast.[13] This was the *avenger of blood*, who was about to avenge the land of Egypt for the pollution caused by the murder of the Hebrew males at least 80 years before.[14] Any family that did not acknowledge its need for a sacrificial substitute would make its sacrifice with its firstborn son. There was no escape from this sacrifice; it was only a question of *which kind of firstborn sacrifice* a family would choose to offer to God: human or animal.

The Egyptians chose to cling to their faith in Pharaoh's divinity, in the hope that this final plague would not come upon them. Not one Egyptian family took its stand with the God of the Hebrews, "for

12. The anti-capitalist Christian social critic Ronald Sider wrote this: "The God of the Bible cares when people enslave and oppress others. At the Exodus he acted to end economic oppression and bring freedom to slaves. . . . The Exodus was certainly the decisive event in the creation of the chosen people. We distort the biblical interpretation of this momentous occasion. unless we see that at this pivotal point, the Lord of the universe was at work correcting oppression and liberating the poor." Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), pp. 60–61. The book was a best-seller.

13. This destroyer may have been an angel, possibly the angel of the Lord. Hebrews 11:28 personifies the destroying agent: "he that destroyed," in the King James Version; "the destroying/one" in the Greek. James G. Murphy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: James Publications, [1868] 1976), p. 128.

14. The avenger of blood was the judge of all the inhabitants of Egypt, including the Hebrews and the mixed multitude. He was avenging the land at last for the murder of the Hebrew infant males, who had been drowned in the Nile (Ex. 1:22). The first judgment had been against the Nile, turning it into blood (Ex. 7:17–21). Now the death of the firstborn male children would cleanse the land of its pollution.

there was not a house where there was not one dead" (Ex. 12:30b). Once again, the gods of Egypt failed them. God had executed judgment upon all the gods of Egypt, including the Pharaoh, the self-proclaimed divine-human link on earth.

The Egyptians had seen Pharaoh fail to protect the nation; plague after plague came upon them, yet they did not recognize the imminence and inescapability of this final judgment. Egypt had long seemed immune to foreign invasion and foreign domination; now the slaves of Egypt would alone be protected from judgment. Goshen, the home of God's people, would alone receive protection, but only because of the willingness of these people to recognize judgment and take steps to avoid it.[15]

The Hebrews had been in Egypt for at least two centuries. They had worked on Egypt's monuments and cities for at least two generations. The Egyptians expected this slave population to remain subservient on a permanent basis. So did most of the members of that population. God's promise to Abraham had been forgotten. Even with Moses' words before them, and the Passover meal required of them, they did not really expect deliverance. "And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual" (Ex. 12:39). They had prepared no food for the journey. Why had they made no preparations for their imminent journey? The answer seems obvious: *they really did not expect God's overnight deliverance*. The Passover ceremony pointed to just such a deliverance, but they did not really believe it. They did what they were instructed by Moses and Aaron (Ex. 12:50), but no more. *Their religion was a minimal religion*, as their actions demonstrated repeatedly for the next 40 years.

After at least two centuries in Egypt, the Hebrews had grown accustomed to their environment. The envy of the Hebrews against Moses 40 years earlier had kept them in bondage, for they had not been

15. It could be objected that God never did offer a way of escape to the Egyptians. There is no explicit evidence that God did tell them of the blood on the doorposts, but there is little doubt that Egypt's representatives by this time were monitoring everything the Hebrews did or said. They must have known. These people were not ignorant of God's law; they had been placed under the administration of Joseph two centuries before. Also, the confrontations between Moses and Pharaoh indicate that Pharaoh knew exactly the crimes Egypt had committed against the Hebrews. Finally, I argue that the free offer of the gospel must not be denied: John Murray, "The Free Offer of the Gospel," in *Collected Writings of John Murray*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), IV, pp. 113–32.

content to be judged by Moses. They had preferred to bring Moses low, even though this meant that their Egyptian rulers would remain dominant over them. They had been willing to remain slaves rather than risk standing up with the young Moses. When Moses returned to challenge Pharaoh, their sons complained bitterly to Moses that his troublemaking had brought new burdens upon them (Ex. 5:21). They preferred to trust the continuing tyranny of Egypt rather than trust the promise of God or His servants, Moses and Aaron. *They put their faith in the Egyptian state rather than God*. To that extent, they agreed with the religion of their captors. As Joshua warned their children, "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord" (Josh. 24:14). Notice the words, "in sincerity and in truth"; they are important for understanding the apostle Paul's references to unleavened bread, discussed below.

The familiarity of present troubles makes men hesitate to seek risky improvements in their condition. The risks of change seem too high, and the benefits seem too few or too far removed. Men choose today's horrors in preference to tomorrow's unfamiliar problems, even if those problems will be accompanied with the personal freedom to deal with them. *Personal responsibility is too great a burden for slaves*. The slave becomes passive toward his environment, content to accept what the world brings, so long as he can avoid life's hard decisions. What keeps slaves in bondage, even when freedom is possible? *Their willingness to put up with a harsh environment, just so long as it is a familiar one that brings few opportunities for personal initiative and therefore personal responsibility*. Joseph was in bondage, but he did not evade responsibility. Such a slave usually does not remain in bondage permanently, for he is not mentally a slave. The willingness of some men to bear the burdens of responsible choice eventually makes them too valuable, or too powerful, for their masters to keep in servitude. *Fully responsible men are difficult to enslave*.

The Hebrews preferred low-risk institutional continuity. They preferred a life of little or no personal responsibility. This was a great asset for their masters, who could then devote more of their resources to things other than the suppression of rebellion. Fewer taskmasters and guards were needed, for the prisoners were docile. Even after their deliverance, that generation continued to complain to Moses about the rigors and dangers of the wilderness, despite the fact that God provided them with manna, clothing that never wore out, and

feet that did not swell or blister (Deut. 8:3–4;[16] Neh. 9:21).

Unquestionably, institutional continuity under most conditions is a valid goal in life. We want marital continuity when we exchange vows with our mates. We want continuity in our legal system, so that when we drive at the posted speed limit, for example, we are not issued a traffic citation by a police officer who has autonomously and arbitrarily made up new rules. At the same time, most of us want our marriages to develop, since maturity is basic to a successful life. And if we find that the existing speed limit is no longer adequate to protect life and limb, then we want legal procedures for having the speed limit changed. Therefore, *institutional continuity should be understood in terms of a framework of potential change*, except for changes in certain areas that are governed by God's Bible-revealed law. Even here, God reserves the right to make changes in His laws, or suspend external judgment for a time. A good example is God's retroactive suspension of a law that prohibited Passover to ritually unsanctified Hebrews. Because some members of the nation under Hezekiah had not been ritually purified when they ate the Passover,[17] Hezekiah prayed that they be forgiven. God healed them retroactively, thereby overlooking the written requirements of the Mosaic law (II Chron. 30:17–20).[18] If we seek the continuity of the Medes and the Persians, where the king's word was absolutely inviolable, then we may face potential disasters, as Darius did when he was forced to sentence Daniel to the lions' den (Dan. 6:14). Life's conditions change, and men's survival and prosperity depend on quick and competent reactions to changed conditions. Static continuity—the complete predictability of a familiar and dependable future—is an illegitimate goal. It is the world of the grave.

C. Structure and Change

We are here dealing with the inescapable problem of structure and change, which is a variation of the traditional philosophical problem, the one (structure, unity) and the many (change, diverse conditions).

16. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 18.

17. The nature of this lack of purification is not stated.

18. The priests had begun to cleanse the temple in the first month of the first year of his reign, which was also Passover month. Passover had to be celebrated by the fourteenth day, but they did not complete the cleansing of the temple until the sixteenth (II Chron. 29:17). It was too late to celebrate Passover normally. But the second month was legitimate for travellers or people defiled by a dead body on the normal day of Passover (Num. 9:9–11). Hezekiah called for the Passover to be celebrated the next month, but all of the people were still not purified.

Men want predictable law and predictable environments, yet they do not want to be strangled by their laws or their environment. In every science, in every field of human thought, we face the problem of structure and change, of law and flux.[19]

In the field of modern historiography, scholars tend to be divided into two camps: the revolutionists and the consensus historians.[20] One group sees man's history as a series of revolutions, or at least major conflicts. Karl Marx is perhaps the most prominent of the revolutionists; he was a proponent of violent revolution. "Revolutions are the locomotives of history," he wrote.[21] Yet revolutions take place within *a framework of continuity*. They do not totally destroy the past. In contrast to the revolutionists are the consensus historians, who see history in terms of progress by means of agreement and compromise: social evolution.

The conservative American sociologist Robert Nisbet articulated a theory of social change that opposes both social revolutionism and social evolutionism as valid explanations of "inevitable" historical development. "That things should continue in time, persist, hold stable, is not to be doubted. Given such persistence, changes, however far apart, however random, discrete, and disconnected they may be in themselves, are nonetheless given the semblance of a continuity by the persisting identity itself—by the persisting kinship system, social class, religion, or whatever it may be. But, as a moment's reflection tells us, there is no continuity of change here; only continuity in the sense of persistence, punctuated, however, by the changes which occur from time to time."[22] Without a consensus against which revolutionaries can rebel, all revolutions would become mere chaos, with-

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19. I used a chemistry textbook in college called *Structure and Change*, by Gordon S. Christiansen and Paul Garrett (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1960). The problem is basic to every academic discipline.

20. See, for example, *Conflict or Consensus in American History*, eds. Allen F. Davis and Harold D. Woodman (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1966). They wrote in the introduction: "Has there been real conflict in American history between classes, sections, and interest groups, or has the story of the American past been primarily one of general agreement or consensus? This theme, expressed either explicitly or implicitly, may be found in virtually all major interpretations of our country's past" (p. vii). Cf. James P. Young (ed.), *Consensus and Conflict: Readings in American Politics* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1972).

21. Karl Marx, "The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850" (1850); in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, [1969] 1977), I, p. 277.

22. Robert A. Nisbet, *Social Change and History: Aspects of the Western Theory of Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 288–89.

out meaning or direction.[23]

In contrast to the revolutionists, consensus historians are defenders of the idea of continuity. Wherever they look, they cannot find "true" revolutions: the industrial revolution really was too slow to be called a revolution, as was the agricultural revolution, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and possibly even the Russian Revolution. Because every revolution retains elements from the past, it is possible to focus on the elements that have remained stable, and then conclude that the supposed revolutions, in and of themselves, really do not change societies very much in the long run. "The more things change, the more things stay the same," says a French proverb.

Then when is a revolution *really* a revolution?

D. Ethical Continuity

Pharaoh did not really grasp the revolutionary nature of the crisis he was facing. He believed in the continuity of being between his own nature and the power gods of Egypt. He therefore believed in the eternality of Egyptian power. These upstart Hebrews, he knew, could be brought to heel. Their God was not really a totally sovereign being. Their God was not really able to deliver them out of his hand.

To a great extent, the Hebrew slaves shared his view. They also did not believe that Moses was representing a sovereign God who would deliver them from bondage. Not even after the plagues on Egypt had brought their Egyptian masters low did they believe that their external conditions would change. *Institutional continuity* was still dominant in their thinking, for *ontological continuity between God and man* was still dominant in their thinking. They trusted more in the theocratic power of Egypt's gods than they did in the God of Moses. They believed that they would still remain slaves in Egypt, as their fathers

23. Gunther Stent, a molecular biologist, commented on this problem with respect to artistic revolutions. They are eventually selfdefeating, he argued. "As artistic evolution unfolds, the artist is being freed more and more from strict canons governing the method of working his medium of creative expression. The end result of this evolution has been that, finally, in our time, the artist's liberation has been almost total. However, the artist's accession to neartotal freedom of expression now presents very great cognitive difficulties for the appreciation of his work: The absence of recognizable canons reduces his act of creation to nearrandomness for the perceiver. In other words, artistic evolution along the oneway street to freedom embodies an element of selflimitation. The greater the freedom already attained and hence the closer the approach to the random of any artistic style for the percipient, the less possible for any successor style to seem significantly different from its predecessor." Stent, *The Coming of the Golden Age: A View of the End of Progress* (Garden City, New York: Natural History Press, published for the American Museum of Natural History, 1969), p. 98.

had been. And if the gods of Egypt were what Pharaoh claimed, then there could never be a radical break with the past.

The history of the patriarchs should have warned them against such a view of history. The creation was itself an incomparably radical break—a break into history, or better stated, the advent of history out of nothing. The creation of the species, the creation of Adam, and the creation of Eve were all radical breaks. Adam's rebellion was a break, and the signs of that break are with men still, since the creation labors under a curse (Gen. 3:17–18;[24] Rom. 8:19–22[25]). The flood in Noah's day was a startling break with the past—a clean sweep of unimaginable proportions. The scattering at Babel, the calling of Abraham, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the famine of Joseph's day were all discontinuities in history.

On the one hand, *historical continuity is guaranteed by the transcendent plan (decree) of God over history*, which is unshakable in its permanence. Because of the centrality of biblical law and its sanctions, *historical continuity rests on ethical continuity*. Men and societies are totally responsible before God, who sustains the entire creation and whose decree is inescapable. On the other hand, actual historical events are sometimes sharp breaks from the historical continuities that preceded the breaks.

Passover was meant to teach the Israelites three things: (1) God judges kings and commoners in terms of His law and its historical sanctions; (2) the foundation of human freedom and human progress is ethical; (3) God's grace delivers His people. This raises two fundamental questions. First, which divinity will men worship, God or some idolatrous representation of another god, either natural or supernatural? Second, which law-order will men attempt to conform to, God's or some idol's?[26] The continuity that relates covenantal faithfulness to institutional blessings (Deut. 8:18;[27] 28:1–14[28]) is contrasted with the institutional discontinuities produced by God's judgment against ethical rebellion (Deut. 8:19–20;[29] 28:15–68). The exodus was the archetypal event in Israel's history that revealed the relationship between faithfulness and institutional continuity, and also the rela-

24. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion, ch. 12.*

25. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 5.

26. Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction: Christian Faith and Its Confrontation with American History* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, [1983] 1993).

27. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 22.

28. *Ibid*., ch. 71.

29. *Ibid*., ch. 23.

tionship between ethical rebellion and institutional discontinuity.

E. Passover: Deliverance and Conquest

When Moses announced to his people that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was about to lead them out of bondage, they did not believe it. They had lost their faith in God's providence, which necessarily involves a concept of cosmic personalism.[30] God had given a promise to Abraham, their patriarch. That promise involved the unfolding of history. But the promised unfolding was not a garment without wrinkles. It was inevitable, but it involved visible alterations of historical patterns. The years spent in captivity were not normative. The years spent under the gods of Egypt were not to become static standards for future events. God told them that He was about to shake the very foundations of Egypt. Just as He had promised, they were about to be led into the land of Canaan. The famine had driven the Hebrews into Egypt in Joseph's day; now God would lead them out.

1. Discontinuity and Redemption

They had to be *driven* out. The Egyptians implored them to leave on the night of the death of the firstborn. "And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men" (Ex. 12:33). These slaves might otherwise have remained in Egypt; indeed, they later begged Moses to allow them to return to Egypt (Num. 14:3). The plagues were brought to Egypt not merely to convince the Egyptian Pharaoh to allow the Hebrews to go and sacrifice for a week. They were not imposed merely to convince the Egyptians to let the Hebrews leave permanently. They were imposed as a means of *making it impossible for the Hebrews to stay right where they were, in a position of irresponsible subservience to foreign gods*. The plagues forced the Hebrews out of Egypt and into the wilderness.

Passover was designed to impress the Hebrews of Moses' day, as well as all succeeding generations of Hebrews, with the stark reality of *rapid historical change in a culture that comes under the visible judgment of God*. They were to eat unleavened bread. There was no time for the yeast to do its work: unleavened bread was the only kind allowed. Unleavened bread is quicker to bake. Everything about Passover pointed to *haste*: the unleavened bread, the roasted lamb that

30. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 1.

was to be completely consumed by morning, and even the eating: "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover" (Ex. 12:11). Everything in Passover pointed to God's deliverance of His people from bondage—literally, an *overnight deliverance*. The lamb was consumed in one night. The people were to stand, staffs in their hand, shoes on their feet, ready to march. *Ready to march*: out of Ur, out of Haran, out of Sodom, out of Egypt, and into the Promised Land. God's people were to celebrate a feast as an army celebrates a victory, for their feast pointed to the coming victory—over Egypt, over Canaan, and especially over sin (Eph. 6:10–18). It was a pre-victory feast, celebrated before marching orders were officially given.

Passover reminds all future generations of God's people of *the miraculous discontinuity of God's redemption in history*. God passed over the houses of the Hebrews, and the destroyer passed through the houses of His enemies, taking as a lawful sacrifice the firstborn. Then Israel passed through the Red Sea and finally through the Jordan River. Had they remained faithful to God, they would have passed through the wilderness in much less than 40 years. *When God "passes through" a rebellious culture, judgment is at hand*. The Hebrews became instruments of His judgment in Canaan.

2. Marching Orders

The Passover feast was to remind them of both life and death. It was to remind them of *the need for immediate marching at the command of God*. There was no time to waste. A shattering of Egypt's foundations was about to begin. The Israelites were being called out of Egypt. Yet this also meant one of two things: being *called into the wilderness* for the remainder of their lives, or being *called into Canaan*. Leaving meant going. Going where? The wilderness or the Promised Land? *We can never leave without going*. Even our departure from the world demands that we travel to a final destination: the new heavens and new earth, or the lake of fire. (Heaven and hell are "holding areas" or "embarkation points," not permanent resting places: Rev. 20:12–14.) The Hebrews knew what leaving Egypt meant: *a radical break with their immediate past* and all of its familiar aspects—a break that would inaugurate a new era of personal responsibility. Their complaints in the wilderness demonstrated that they preferred not to remain there, and their refusal to enter the land of Canaan immediately indicated

that they chose not to go there, either.[31] They preferred "Canaan at zero price." They could not get God to agree on the price they were willing to pay. Yet God would not permit them to return to Egypt. It was Moses' pleading on their behalf that kept them from departing from this world immediately—the obvious alternative for this complaining nation (Ex. 32:9–14).

Passover necessarily pointed to *conquest*. They could not leave Egypt without marching to war. Passover pointed to a new life, and this new life requires *full personal responsibility before God*. It pointed to *dominion*. The land of Canaan had to be subdued by military force if God's promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled. The Passover feast was to be eaten in haste, for God was about to mobilize an army, where only 70 lineal heirs and their households had come down into Egypt two centuries before. Egypt had served as a recruiting depot; the wilderness came to serve as boot camp; and the army, under Joshua, won the battle.

The Hebrews believed Moses enough to sprinkle the blood and eat the Passover feast. That is all God required of them in order for them to avoid making the costly sacrifice that the Egyptians paid. Yet the Hebrew slaves did not believe Moses beyond that minimal commitment. They did not believe they could escape through the Red Sea. They did not believe they would find food and water in the wilderness. They did not believe they could defeat the cities of Canaan. They did not truly believe that Egypt, with all its tyranny, was really that terrible. They believed only that God would take their firstborn if they refused to participate, and that was sufficient. Their children, whom they did not sacrifice to God's wrath, became the firstfruits in the wilderness; it was they who conquered Canaan. The firstborn sons were preserved by the ritual conformity of their parents' minimal covenantal faithfulness. The parents did not save anything else. Their faith extended this far, and no farther; that was also the limit of their blessing. *God kept them alive in the wilderness for the sake of their children*. The covenant blood line was preserved (Gen. 49:10), and the tribes were preserved. Their own skins were preserved, but only to rot after death in the wilderness they dreaded.

God had called an army into battle that was not ready to fight. All

31. It could be argued that the Israelites simply feared to enter Canaan, but they did not specifically choose not to go in. This argument is misleading. The concept of choice necessarily involves selection among alternatives. It involves giving up one set of conditions in exchange for another set. The Israelites chose not to exchange the perceived safety of wandering in the wilderness for the perceived danger of confronting the people of Canaan in battle. In short, they chose not to enter Canaan.

it was ready to do was to save its firstborn and then leave, under the intense pressure of their former captors.

F. The Peace Treaty

The New Testament Passover is Christ (I Cor. 5:7). When Christ celebrated Passover, He sat down with the disciples (Luke 22:14). They did not stand with staffs in their hands, ready to march out of Egypt and into Canaan. They had at last arrived; they could rest in confidence.[32] Christ's sacrifice transferred all power to Himself (Matt. 28:18).[33] Those who drink His cup and eat His bread are *judges and ambassadors* (Eph. 6:20). "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29–30). *The world has been conquered in principle*: "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b).

God's judges carry His law to the defeated kingdoms of Satan, just as they carried His law to Israel in the years before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.[34] The new Israel, the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), is to be judged by the law (Rom. 2:12). But, as an army that in principle has already conquered, this new Israel must sit in judgment of the world. *The whole world is Canaan now, and Christ announced His victory over it*. As judges, in time and on earth, Christians are to make manifest that victory by imposing the terms of the treaty of the great King.[35] *Armies*

32. Alfred Edersheim, the latenineteenthcentury historian, reported that even before Christ's celebration of the Last Supper, the Hebrews had abandoned the original Passover requirement that they remain standing. "As the guests gathered around the Paschal table, they came no longer, as at the first celebration, with their 'loins girded,' with shoes on their feet, and a staff in their hand—that is, as travellers waiting to take their departure. On the contrary, they were arrayed in their best festive garments, joyous and at rest, as became children of a king. To express this idea the Rabbis also insisted that the Paschal Supper—or at least part of it—must be eaten in that recumbent position with which we are familiar from the New Testament. 'For,' say they, 'they use this leaning posture, as free men do, in memorial of their freedom.' And, again, 'Because it is the manner of slaves to eat standing, therefore now they eat sitting and leaning, in order to show that they have been delivered from bondage into freedom.'" Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministries and Services* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, [1874] 1975), p. 234.

33. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 48.

34. For a grim account of the fall of Jerusalem, see the primary source document written by Josephus, a Hebrew zealot who defected to the invading Roman army before defection became impossible. *Wars of the Jews*, Books V and VI, in Josephus, *Collected Works*, trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel, [1960] 1977).

35. The phrase is Meredith Kline's: *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of*

stand, for they must be ready to march. *Judges sit*, ready to dispense judgment. Christians are not warriors whose primary assignment is to physically destroy nations that are not yet ethically subdued; they are instead *ambassadors*—an army of ambassadors who come before a defeated population to announce the terms of peace. But this peace treaty involves *surrender*; it is imposed by a *victor*. The enemy's commander was defeated at Calvary; it is our task to convince his subordinates to lay down their weapons and sign the peace treaty.[36] The decisive battle was won at Calvary; the mopping-up operation is still going on (Rom. 16:20; I John 3:8).

There has been a shift in assignments ever since the days of Passover. The Hebrews were commanded to annihilate their Canaanitic enemies. God planned to make a clean sweep of the land of Canaan. He intended the total devastation of those nations. The Hebrews were to spare no one (Deut. 7:16–24). Dominion was to be by means of military might initially, and later by settling the land. While there was eventually to be evangelism, as the Book of Jonah indicates, the Hebrews were first to establish the kingdom in Israel on a firm basis, and then God's promised blessings were to bring a particular response on the part of Israel: expansion.

Ever since the resurrection, Christ has been planting His kingdom by means of *the sword of the gospel*. The word of God, we are told, is sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12). We possess "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). The prophecy of Isaiah is progressively coming true: "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isa. 11:4). *Those who bring the message of Christ are ethical soldiers*. Their main task is to judge the world, subduing it by means of the Holy Spirit, but in terms of His Bible-revealed law. God's kingdom has been removed from genetic Israel and given to those who bring forth its fruits (Matt. 21:43). The fruits produced by righteous living manifest the kingdom. Lawful living, in time and on earth, verifies a man's claim to the kingdom (Matt. 7:15–20).[37]

The entry into Canaan was a preliminary battle. God's title to the land was made manifest by the success of His people on the battlefield. In Egypt and in Canaan, He demonstrated His sovereignty for

Deuteronomy (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1963).

36. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010).

37. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 18.

all to see. The victory over Satan at Calvary has released *an army of judges* who spread the message of salvation throughout the world. These ambassadors rest in Christ's victory. They know the mortal blow has been delivered by Christ; Satan roars like a dying wild beast—dangerous to those in his path, but nonetheless vanquished.

Christians no longer celebrate Passover standing up, as if we were a literal army about to receive marching orders. We have *already* received our marching orders. They are in fact on the march, as agents of a victorious commander, calling out the terms of surrender as judges. Men must sign the peace treaty now, *before* they meet the church's commander. Christians are the emissaries of a mighty commanding officer, who sends them to the enemy with an offer of peace, as required by biblical law (Deut. 20:10). To refuse to surrender means total defeat, eternal defeat.

The New Testament soldier is a judge. We are to establish a new civilization based on God's law. Rushdoony wrote:

> In brief, every law-order is a state of war against the enemies of that order, *and all law is a form of warfare*. Every law declares that certain offenders are enemies of the law-order and must be arrested. For limited offenses, there are limited penalties; for capital offenses, capital punishment. *Law is a state of war*; it is the organization of the powers of civil government to bring the enemies of the law-order to justice. The officers of the law are properly armed; in a godly state, they should be armed by the justice of the law as well as weapons of warfare, in order to defend society against its enemies. Friends of the law will therefore seek at all times to improve, strengthen, and confirm a godly law-order. Enemies of the law will accordingly be in continuing warfare against the law. . . . Men cannot seek co-existence with evil without thereby declaring war against God.[38]

Christ's peace treaty involves surrender to Him, but the promise of victory, in this world, as well as in eternity. His law will triumph, for His kingdom has been established on the battlefield at Calvary.[39]

G. Continual Warfare

Paul wrote, concerning the internal warfare of regenerate men, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my mem-

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38. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), pp. 93–94.

39. David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion* (Tyler, Texas: Dominion Press, 1985); Roderick Campbell, *Israel and the New Covenant* (Tyler, Texas: Geneva Divinity School Press, [1954] 1982).

bers" (Rom. 7:23). He also wrote: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). Yet we also know that Christ, having spoiled principalities and powers, "made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15b). So, the chief battle is behind us. The mopping-up operation in our own hearts continues. Our weapon of personal self-dominion is the law of God. It is a lifetime battle against sin and its effects.

1. Judicial Continuity

There is continuity in Christians' warfare today—a step-by-step process of conquest. First of all, it is *internal ethical warfare*: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:9–10). Second, it is *external cultural warfare*: "But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken" (Isa. 28:13). Line upon line, law upon law, institution by institution, nation by nation: the whole earth is subdued to the glory of God.

The Hebrews marched out of Egypt victorious. That victory had been won by a series of *10 radically discontinuous events*: blood, frogs, lice, swarms, cattle plague, boils, locusts, hail, darkness, and the death of Egypt's firstborn. Then they marched across the dry path cleared through the Red Sea. A generation later, their children, under Joshua, marched through a path in the Jordan River, and one by one, the cities of Canaan fell. Like the walls of Jericho, they all (or almost all) came tumbling down. God's miraculous delivery of Israel demonstrated His control over the realm of human history. The prophets reminded their listeners of this radically discontinuous history—a history marked by the miracles of God—when they came before them to call the people to repentance.

At the same time, *the Israelites were to rely increasingly on the regularities of biblical law*. The manna ceased when they crossed into Canaan (Josh. 5:12).[40] In Hebrews 9:4 we are told that the Ark of the Covenant contained the tables of the covenant, a pot containing manna,

40. Gary North, *Disobedience and Defeat: An Economic Commentary on the Historical Books* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 2.

and Aaron's rod. These were manifestations of God's dealings with them, and they involved discontinuous events in Israel's history. But Aaron's rod no longer has power, and the manna has ceased. It is God's law-order, proclaimed on the tablets of stone, and empowered by the Spirit, which remains powerful.[41] It is *the continuity of God's law*, not the implements of God's previous miraculous discontinuities in history, that is *the tool of dominion in New Testament times*. It was the primary tool even in Old Testament times.

2. New Testament Revisions

Christians do not celebrate Passover in the way prescribed by Moses in Exodus 12. We are not to wait for the earthly appearance of the Messiah. He has already appeared. He has won His victory. The chief battle is long over.

We are in the land of Canaan. We have crossed over the Jordan River. There are still cities to conquer, but the sharp discontinuities of the past are not to become our standards of conquest for today. It is the steady preaching of the gospel, the subduing of sin in each man, and the continuous extension of God's law over human culture, that constitutes the New Testament's program of conquest. That is why we can sit with Christ at His communion table, knowing that we will sit with him on thrones. *We are presently symbolically seated with Him on thrones of authority, even as the Hebrews were symbolically standing with, Him, ready to march*. The difference is based on the historical position of the chief military victory, the cross. That victory is behind us, so we can take it for granted. *The battle is now spiritual and cultural*: subduing our spirits and our environment to the Lord, by means of His law.

The revolution *was*.[42] We no longer look for a future radical discontinuity that will establish our earthly dominion. The next major discontinuity is the coming of Christ in final judgment.[43] This takes place after God's rule has been manifested, but prior to the final judgment. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put

41. Obviously, it is not the tablets of stone which are powerful, but the laws proclaimed on them. It is God's law, written in the hearts of His people (II Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10), which is the proper tool of dominion, both internal and external.

42. The phrase comes from a 1938 essay by Garet Garrett, who wrote of the economic and political revolution of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal (1933–54).

43. The conversion of the Jews, forecast in Romans 11, lies ahead. This will lead to the expansion of Christianity as never before. North, *Cooperation and Dominion*, ch. 7.

all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:24–26). Yet Christ's victory is in principle behind us: "For he hath put all things under his feet" (I Cor. 15:27a). Christ has all power right now (Matt. 28:18). *The four great discontinuities of God's New Covenant history are past: Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension*. The arrival of His Spirit at Pentecost gave us our official papers as His ambassadors, our commissions as His judges. There are only two great discontinuities remaining: Satan's final rebellion (Rev. 20:7–8) and defeat (Rev. 20:9–10), and the final judgment (Rev. 20:12–15). (Some commentators might call these two discontinuities the last continuity, since they take place close together.) In between, there are the daily struggles between the two armies, the ebb and flow of the mopping-up operations, and the progressive extension of God's kingdom, in time and on earth.

It is a mistake, then, to expect what Israel was told to expect. It is a mistake to expect the delivery of our marching orders. It is a mistake to expect visible, direct, cataclysmic interventions of God on earth. Miracles still occur, but not the pillar of the cloud and the pillar of fire. God's law is still in force, but we no longer need to have its terms delivered to us on tablets of stone actually written by God. There are still spiritually Canaanitic cities to be conquered, but not by the blast of trumpets on our seventh day of marching around them. We sit at the Lord's victorious table. We no longer stand, staffs in hand. The lamb has been consumed already. We need not offer it again. The blood is on our doorposts. We need not sprinkle it on them again (Heb. 9). *The continuity of God's law*, not the discontinuities of God's military victories or miracles, is *our standard*.[44]

H. Unleavened and Leavened Bread

The unleavened bread that the Hebrews were commanded to use during the Passover feast (Ex. 12:15) was a symbol of the impending discontinuity, their deliverance from Egypt. They had to cook and eat in haste. It was not to symbolize affliction as such, for as Edersheim wrote in the late nineteenth century, "the bread of the Paschal night was not that of affliction because it was unleavened; it was unleavened because it had been that of affliction. For it had been Israel's

44. It is one of the major weaknesses of revivalism in general, and the Pentecostal movement in particular, that Christians have relied so heavily on miraculous manifestations of the power of God, rather than relying on the continuous power of the law of God as a tool of dominion.

'affliction,' and a mark of their bondage and subjection to the Egyptians, to be driven forth in such 'haste' as not even to have time for leavening their bread.... The Passover, therefore, was not so much the remembrance of Israel's bondage as of Israel's deliverance from that bondage, and the bread which had originally been that of affliction, because that of haste, now became, as it were, the bread of a new state of existence. None of Egypt's leaven was to pervade it; nay, all the old leaven, which served as the symbol of corruption and of death, was to be wholly banished from their homes. They were to be 'a new lump,' as they were 'unleavened.'"[45]

They did not have time to allow the yeast of Egypt to leaven their bread. This symbolized *God's overnight deliverance of His people from Egypt*, another reason why the lamb was to be eaten in one night, with nothing left over (Ex. 12:10). *Here was the greatest discontinuity in Israel's history*. Here was the discontinuity that they were to teach to their children (Ex. 12:26–27).

Paul, as a Pharisee, was thoroughly familiar with the meaning of Passover. He did not require us to eat unleavened bread, nor are the bitter herbs required. His own teacher, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), taught the meaning of the lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread, and his words have become authoritative in Jewish law: "Whoever does not explain three things in the Passover has not fulfilled the duty incumbent on him. These three things are: the Passover lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs. The *Passover lamb* means that God passed over the blood-sprinkled place on the houses of our fathers in Egypt; the *unleavened bread* means that our fathers were delivered out of Egypt (in haste); and the *bitter herbs* mean that the Egyptians made bitter the lives of our fathers in Egypt."[46] Christians no longer eat bitter herbs, because Christ has delivered us from sin; the bitterness of Egypt is no longer to be part of our worship. It is the Lamb that was slain, not the deliverance from Egypt, which is our central celebration as Christians. *Christians are on the offensive now, carrying redeemed Canaan's leaven back into Egypt* (Isa. 19).

1. Leaven

The progress of Christ's kingdom is to be like the leavening of bread. "Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures

45. Edersheim, *Temple*, pp. 249–50.
46. Gamaliel, cited by Edersheim, *ibid.*, p. 237.

of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Matt. 13:33).[47] *Leaven is not a symbol of sin*. Yes, the leaven of Egypt was evil. The corrupting effects of Egyptian culture and Egyptian religion no doubt burdened the Israelites. They were to purge away all their leaven in the week before the exodus (Ex. 12:15). This meant that none of Egypt's leaven was to be carried into Canaan with them, to serve as the source of corruption in the promised land. *Egypt's leaven was perverse, but not leaven as such*. The Hebrew term for leaven in Exodus 12:15, "put away leaven out of your houses," and in Exodus 12:19a, "Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses," is transliterated *se'or*. It was leavened dough, and a bit of it was retained in an unbaked form, so that it could be used to "start" the next batch of dough. Leavened bread, the finished product, was also forbidden: none of the actual products of Egypt's leaven would go into Canaan. Neither the "starter" nor the finished product would leave Egypt with the Hebrews. *Egypt's leaven stood for sin, but there can also be holy leaven. In fact, there* ***must*** *be holy leaven*. Modern expositors who follow a dispensational-premillennial outline fail to recognize this distinction,[48] but the ancient Hebrews understood it quite well.

How do we know this? Because leavened bread was offered as the firstfruits of the Lord, meaning that leavened bread was the best of a family's productivity: "Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baken with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD" (Lev. 23:17). *Leaven is the best bread man has to offer, the bread he eats with pleasure*. It is man's best grain offering to God. *Leaven, in short, is a symbol of growth, maturation, continuity, and prosperity*. But such leaven must be the leaven of the promised land, the leaven of redeemed Canaan. It must not be the leaven of Egypt.

It is important to understand the general peace offerings made by individual Israelites, as well as the nationally observed ritual of the firstfruits. The peace offerings of unleavened bread were also accompanied with unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (Lev. 7:12). The priests and offerer ate the peace-offering, which was a unique feature of the peace-offering. In this sense, concluded Andrew Jukes, this offering shows communion:

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47. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 30.

48. The standard view is that of the *Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1909): "Leaven, as a symbolic or typical substance, is always mentioned in the O.T. in an evil sense. . . ." Note 4, p. 1016: Matthew 13:33.

God, priest, and offerer.[49] Christ was our offering, yet He was the offerer; He was also the High Priest and God.[50] He was the firstfruits (I Cor. 15:23), from which the peace-offering had to be made.

Leavened dough could not be burned lawfully on the altar (Lev. 2:11). It had to be brought already baked, ready for eating. Leavened bread was offered as a *finished work*, the fully-risen product of the "starter." It was not to be burned on God's altar, not because it was "corrupted" or "sin-laden," but because it was *a finished loaf*.[51] Burning it would have ruined it. It was not the "corrupted" nature of leaven that kept it off God's fiery altar, for honey was also prohibited (Lev. 2:11). There was nothing corrupt about honey. Honey, like leavened bread, is a finished product, the product of labor, capital, and time.

2. Pentecost

It is extremely important to note that this compulsory offering of the firstfruits, which included the leavened bread offering, came on the day of Pentecost. The Greek word, "pentekostos," means fifty. The firstfruits offering was made on the fiftieth day after the sabbath day of the Passover week, the feast of unleavened bread (Lev. 23:15–16), meaning 49 days after the wave offering. On the day after the sabbath of Passover week, the priests brought a sheaf of grain offering and waved it before God. Then, 49 days of maturation later, came the baked bread of the day of Pentecost. At *Passover*, the people were required to use *unleavened* bread, the symbol of religious, cultural, and historical *discontinuity*. At *Pentecost*, they were required to offer *leavened* bread, the symbol of *continuity and completion*. At Passover, Israel found its release from bondage. At Pentecost, they experienced full blessings.

Cassuto believed that the law was given to the Israelites seven

49. Andrew Jukes, *The Law of the Offerings* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel, 1968), pp. 115–21. The book was first published in the late nineteenth century.

50. *Ibid*., pp. 118–19.

51. Rushdoony's assessment of the meaning of leaven is incorrect. He wrote: "Leaven is taken by some as a symbol or type of sin; it is rather a symbol of corruptibility. . . . Man's obedience to the law is a leavened offering, clearly corruptible, yet when faithful and obedient to God's authority and order, a 'sacrifice' wellpleasing in His sight and assured of His reward." *Institutes of Biblical Law*, p. 83. I am arguing that leaven symbolizes neither sin nor corruptibility; leaven is a symbol of the continuity of development, meaning maturation over time. All of men's offerings are corruptible; focusing on leaven as a uniquely corruptible offering misses the point. Leaven as a symbol of continuity fits Rushdoony's postmillennial eschatology far better than leaven as a symbol of corruptibility.

weeks after the exodus. Exodus 19:1 reads: "In the third month [new moon], when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai." Cassuto commented.

> The mention of the third new moon is not unintentional. Since the exodus from Egypt, the last two weeks of Nissan and four weeks of Iyyar had passed, and we are now in the seventh week. Since seven was considered the number of perfection, seven days constituted, according to the customary conception of the ancient East, a given unit of time, while seven weeks formed a still higher unit; and just as after six days of labour the seventh day brought rest and the enjoyment of the results of that labour, so after six weeks of the travails of journeying, the seventh week brought a sense of exaltation and of drawing nearer to the word Divine. Although the Torah does not state the exact day on which the Revelation on Mount Sinai occurred, and only the later tradition connects the Festival of Weeks with the commemorative of the giving of the Torah, yet it is obvious that this tradition corresponds to what, if not expressly stated in Scripture, is at least alluded to therein by inference.[52]

The firstfruits offering on the day following the sabbath of Passover week was marked by the wave offering of the sheaf of grain—the unbaked offering (Lev. 23:10–11). At Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, 49 days later, the wave offering was a pair of leavened loaves (Lev. 23:17). In the interim, the grain had been harvested, ground into flour, allowed to rise by means of yeast, and baked as a completed offering to God. This symbolism of discontinuity, followed by continuity, should be clear enough.

3. New Testament Symbolism

The same parallelism is present in the New Testament events: the Passover meal of Christ and the disciples, followed by His death and resurrection.[53] Then, 49 days after Christ's resurrection, came the day

52. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, [1951] 1974), p. 224.

53. There are some difficult problems associated with the dating of Christ's Passover meal with the disciples. The most convincing presentation is Hoehner's: they met on Thursday night, Nissan 14, which was the Pharisees' practice. The Passover lamb was slain between 3–5 P.M. that afternoon by the Pharisees and Galileans. The Judean dating, used by the Sadducees, was different. They slew the lamb that year on Friday afternoon, since they dated Nissan 14 from Thursday evening. This explains why Jesus and the disciples ate their Passover meal the night before Jesus was crucified, and why the Jews did not enter the Praetorium when they took Jesus to Pilate, "lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover" (John 18:28b). This confrontation between Jesus and His accusers took place on Nissan 15, as reckoned by the Pharisees, and

of Pentecost. The break with the old covenant was established by Christ's death and resurrection, when He inaugurated a new era. He gave the Holy Spirit to His disciples on the day of resurrection (John 20:22). The manifestations of power of the Holy Spirit came seven weeks later, at Pentecost (Acts 2). The church, Christ's body (I Cor. 12:12–27),[54] was established as a visible unity at Pentecost. "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (I Cor. 10:17). Yet Christ equated His own body with bread (I Cor. 11:24). The New Testament parallels with Passover and Pentecost in the Old Testament should be obvious. *The coming of God's Spirit at Pentecost was God's presentation of the newly leavened loaf of the church*—a presentation to the Son (Dan. 7:13–14). The day of Pentecost in the New Testament was God's presentation of the risen bread of the church, which paralleled the risen Lord Jesus (an event that took place 49 days earlier), who is called "Christ the firstfruits" by Paul (I Cor. 15:23). Leaven is a product of resurrection: Christ's, the church's, and the day of judgment's. *The great discontinuity at Calvary has produced a new continuity: the civilization of the kingdom of God*.

Paul spoke of the leavened and unleavened bread. "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:6–8). Paul was contrasting the old leaven (evil) with unleavened (a new ethical beginning). (The King James translators added the word "bread.") He was speaking of Christ our Passover. In the Passover feast, unleavened bread was eaten in order to purge away the leaven of Egypt, the leaven of sin. Christ, like the unleavened bread of Passover, represented a discontinuous break with normal historical development, a break with the maturation of the principle of evil. This is what unleavened bread always symbolized: *a new beginning, a break with the evil maturation principle (leaven) of the past*. This is what Joshua meant when he told the Israelites to serve

on Nissan 14, as reckoned by the Sadducees. Jesus died at about 3 in the afternoon, at precisely the time that the Judeans were slaying their Passover lamb, 24 hours after the Pharisees and Galileans had slain theirs. See Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1977), ch. 4, especially the chart on p. 89. Jesus died on Friday (sixth day) and arose on Sunday (first day) morning.

54. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 15.

God in sincerity and truth (Josh. 24:14). *Evil leaven does not mature into a holy loaf; it must be purged out*. It must be *replaced*. Replaced with what? A new, holy leaven.

Christ was quite specific about this. "How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matt. 16:11–12). The *leavening process of unsound doctrine leads to evil acts*; it is the maturation process of evil yeast. It must be purged out from the beginning. *Purge out the old leaven. This purging is ethical, intellectual, and theological*. It means becoming a new creation (II Cor. 5:17). It means being born again, or born from above (John 3:3–8). *God replaces the old unethical leaven with a new, holy leaven*.

John Calvin recognized the ethical focus of Paul's words regarding leaven and unleavened. "Now, in the solemnity of this sacred feast we must abstain from *leaven*, as God commanded the fathers to abstain. But from what leaven? As the outward passover was to them a figure of the true *passover*, so its appendages were figures of the reality which we at this day possess. If, therefore, we would wish to feed on Christ's flesh and blood, let us bring to this feast *sincerity and truth*. Let these be our loaves of *unleavened bread*. Away with all *malice and wickedness*, for it is unlawful to mix up *leaven* with the *passover*. In fine, he declares that we shall be members of Christ only when we shall have renounced malice and deceit."[55] Calvin did not say that we must eat unleavened bread at the communion table. He said only that we must not bring malice and deceit in our hearts when we come to the Lord's Supper. *God's people must be set apart as unleavened*—free from the religious leaven of rebellion against God and His law. This is the symbolism of discontinuity. It is the symbolism of Christ the Passover. But Christ is also the firstfruits, both unleavened (waving the sheaf) and leavened (waving the loaves). *The discontinuity from sin is supposed to lead to the continuity of dominion*—ethical, ecclesiastical, social, political, and cultural.

4. The Process of Maturation

Leaven is not a symbol of sin. Leaven is a symbol of rising up, the

55. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. John Pringle, Vol. I, which appears as Vol. XX of Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 189.

process of maturation. But there must first be a discontinuous act of implanting the original leaven. Adam, yielding to Satan's temptation, brought forth the leaven of evil, and implanted it into man's history. Christ, the second Adam, removes the old Adamic leaven, implants His new leaven, and creates *a maturing Christian kingdom that steadily replaces Satan's older leaven*. Immediately following the unleavened bread is the beginning of the new leavening process, the *rising up*. Israel was brought *up* out of Egypt (Ex. 17:3). On the third day, Christ *rose* from the dead. On the day of Christ's resurrection, many saints *rose* from the dead (Matt. 27:52–53). On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit presented the risen (leavened) bread offering, the church. *The discontinuous event of redemption is supposed to be followed by the ethical leavening process, a rising up in victory, in time and on earth*. Christ does not simply remove the old leaven. He is not content with unleavened bread, the symbol of deliverance. *Christ produces the new leavened bread, the leavening process of victory*. It is not enough to escape from Egypt; Canaan must be conquered. It is not enough to remain in a spiritually unleavened condition, the condition of "not being leavened with evil." We must become fully leavened as God's individual saints and also as His gathered church. *Where this leaven is absent, there is no life, no growth, and no dominion*.

I. No Leaven on the Old Testament Altar

Neither leaven (yeast) nor the products of leaven' (leavened loaves) could be placed on God's fiery altar during the Old Testament era (Lev. 2:11). We are not told specifically why not. We also are not told why honey was also prohibited. There are two possible explanations that seem to make sense of the prohibition.

1. Full Development

Leavened loaves and honey are finished, *fully developed products*. They are fully matured. No further development is possible. They are both the products of *time*. Neither is hastily produced. They symbolize the end of the maturation process, the fruits of thorough labor. What was offered on God's altar in the Old Testament economy was that which had not had time to mature fully. The animals were yearling lambs (Num. 28:3, 9), young bulls (Num. 28:11), a young goat, or kid (Num. 28:15), and young pigeons (Lev. 1:14; 5:7). The day of atonement required young animals (Num. 29:1–5). These animals had not yet begun their work. The red heifer, which was used to

make the ashes for the water of purification, had to be unblemished, three years old, and never yoked (Num. 19:2). *The sacrifices required an animal cut down in its prime, with its productive life ahead of it*. This animal forfeited both the joys and labors of the bulk of its adult life. *Unquestionably, this symbolism pointed to Jesus Christ, the lamb of God slain in the midst of His prime*. In time and on earth, He forfeited a life of dominion. He forfeited the joy of eating the fruits of His labor. He forfeited the leavened loaves and the honey. He forfeited the blessings of long life, despite His perfect keeping of the law of God. He forfeited all this, so that His people might receive these blessings. Christians are to exercise dominion, in time and on earth. They are to labor. They are to eat the firstfruits, symbolized by Pentecost. They are also to eat the honey and the baked leaven loaves.[56] They are to serve, in short, as *God's leaven*, "incorrupting" Satan's former kingdoms, causing the kingdom of God to rise up. They are given what Christ forfeited: *visible dominion*, in time and on earth. God does not burn up the leaven before its time, before it has matured, before it is fit for communion's joyful eating. A leavened offering, like honey, is not burned on God's altar.

But what about Satan? Isn't Satan eventually burned? Aren't Satan's followers burned, as salted offerings? Haven't they been given time? This points to the removal of the devil's ability to continue to develop. He will be cut down in the midst of his rebellion against God's church (Rev. 20:9). *The very essence of leaven—its ability to spread through the dough—will be removed from Satan*. He will be like unleavened dough, fit only for burning, cut down in God's final discontinuous event, just as Pharaoh was cut down. The "leaven of Egypt" will be purged out, finally, at the end of time. It will be leaven that can no longer do its work. It is finally made useless, like savorless salt, fit

56. Churches do not celebrate the communion meal with honey, yet many of them use leavened bread. This is inconsistent. *The use of leaven points to the use of honey*. The completed work of Christ's sacrifice is behind us historically. The completed offering of Christ at Calvary points both to the use of leaven (the formerly prohibited completed baked bread) and honey (the formerly prohibited completed sweetener). Honey ought to be substituted for the bitter herbs. The church has not been consistent with its symbolism; bitter herbs were never incorporated into the Christian Passover, yet honey has not replaced the Mosaic law's required herbs—an obvious lack of consistency. Passover was to be tasted. What was bitter is now sweet. The contrast has not been made visible symbolically. Deliverance has not been consistently symbolized. The taste of victory implied in honey's sweetness has not been a feature of the church's sacraments. When the church's eschatology changes to a more optimistic view of the role of the church in history, and its victory over creation is made progressively clearer, churches will then adopt the use of honey in the communion service.

only for being ground underfoot (Matt. 5:13).[57] *Satan's leaven is purged at the end of time when the leaven of God's finished loaf has fully matured. Christ's leaven will have done its work.* The fire of the last day bakes this bread, for it is ready for the oven, but Satan's partial leaven is left on the altar forever, never fit for consumption, never fit for God's blessed communion feast. Satan's cultural leaven never fully rises, in time and on earth, since his leaven eventually is replaced by God's leaven.

2. Living Sacrifices

There may have been an additional reason for prohibiting leaven from God's altar. The leaven, until baked, was a living thing. *No living thing was ever lawfully sacrificed on the altar.* Animals were killed at the door of the tabernacle (Lev. 1:3). Then they were brought to the altar for burning. In the case of Satan and his followers, they will be placed in the lake of fire only after they have been slain (Rev. 20:14). This burning is referred to as the second death. No living being was to be burned on the altar, according to Old Testament law.

The one legitimate exception in history was Jesus Christ. As a perfect creation, a perfect human who had fulfilled the terms of the law, Christ was allowed to become a living sacrifice. God accepted this living sacrifice as a substitute. *No other living being was suitable.* All other beings are subject to death. Christ was not, yet He gave up His life for His friends (John 15:13). The sacrificial animals were cut down in the prime of life, but they all faced death eventually. Jesus Christ was cut down in the prime of life when, in terms of His perfect fulfilling of the law, He had not been faced with death.

Christ was a *leavened offering*—an *ethically* fully developed offering—on the symbolic altar, the cross. Christ was a *living sacrifice*, too. In neither case was He violating the laws of the offering. He was instead fulfilling them. The leaven offering (unbaked leavened loaves) and the final baked leavened loaves were not to be burned, but Christ, as *a living man*, and as *a fully developed perfect humanity*, did die on God's altar. Christ, being perfect, was God's own *leavened, living sacrifice* to God's own holiness.

Christ was also a *honey offering*, thereby completing the symbolism. He is said to be the word of God (John 1:1), and the word of God is equated with honey (Ezek. 3:1–3; Rev. 10:9–10). "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Ps. 119:103). The completeness of God's word, the completeness of

57. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 13.

Christ's work, and the completeness of honey as a sweetener come together in Christ's complete sacrifice on Calvary. His perfect honey was acceptable to God as a legitimate offering in this one instance in man's history. These three offerings, which had previously not been allowed on God's altar—leaven, living animals, and honey—completed and ended the Old Testament sacrifices. Only Christ, and not man's leavened imitations, or nature's (honey), was ethically fit for God's altar. His perfect offering was the culmination of the sacrificial system, as the Book of Hebrews teaches. His *ethical perfection* was always the goal of the sacrificial system. The law's prohibition against the use of leaven and honey was there to keep imperfection from claiming the perfection that only Christ legitimately could claim and did claim.

Christians are told to offer themselves as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1).[58] *The sacrificial system is now straightforwardly ethical*. The old sacrifices of rams and goats are over; Christ has replaced them, once and for all, as the true living sacrifice, the only living sacrifice suitable for God's altar. His last words were, "It is finished" (John 19:30). This marked the end of the Old Covenant, the end of the sacrificial system, and the end of Christ's work, in time and on earth, in fulfilling the terms of the Mosaic law. He would no longer appear before men, angels, or God as a man under the curse; the final discontinuity had come to Him as a suffering servant. *There could be no remaining potential ethical development for mankind, as a creature. Christ had fulfilled all of mankind's ethical potential, in time and on earth*. Ethically perfect humanity had been fully realized, in time and on earth. Christ was, in this sense, a *leavened offering*, for He was fully matured, ready for eating, the ultimate development of humanity. Christ, and Christ alone, could become a suitable *living sacrifice*, a living blood offering, as well as a legitimate leavened offering. None of Egypt's leaven was in Him.

What Christ is, man is told to become: not a member of the Trinity, but a perfect man. This is why the church is called His body (I Cor. 12:12–27).[59] This is why it is called bread: "For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (I Cor. 10:17). *The principle of maturation has a goal: full development*. Christ, the head of the church, has already attained this goal. The discontinuity is behind us. The lamb has been sacrificed. The fully developed, fully leavened bread, without a trace of Satan's leaven, has conquered our satanic foe, and has served as redeemed mankind's peace offering,

58. North, *Cooperation and Dominion*, ch. 8.
59. North, *Judgment and Dominion*, ch. 15.

and also as our thank offering. Christ was both *unleavened* (free from Satan's leaven) and *leavened* (fully developed perfect humanity). He was both our discontinuity (the definitive break from the sin principle) and our continuity (the full development of human perfection).

J. The Kingdom as Leaven

The kingdom of God is like leaven. Christianity is the yeast, and it has a leavening effect on pagan, satanic cultures around it. It permeates the whole of culture, causing it to rise. *The bread produced by this leaven is the preferred bread*. In ancient times—indeed, right up until the advent of late-nineteenth-century industrialism and modern agricultural methods—leavened bread was considered the staff of life, the symbol of God's sustaining hand. "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11)[60] Christians have prayed for centuries, and they have eaten leavened bread at their tables. So did the ancient Hebrews. The kingdom of God is the force that produces the fine quality bread that all men seek. The symbolism should be obvious: *Christianity makes life a joy for godly men. It provides men with the very best.*

1. Leaven as Expansion

Leaven takes time to produce its product. It takes time for the leaven-laden dough to rise. *Leaven is a symbol of historical continuity, just as unleavened bread was Israel's symbol of historical discontinuity*. Men can wait for the yeast to do its work. God gives man time for the working of His spiritual leaven. Men may not understand exactly how the leaven works—how the spiritual power of God's kingdom spreads throughout their culture and makes it rise—but they can see and taste its effects. If we really push the analogy (pound it, even), we can point to the fact that dough is pounded down several times by the baker before the final baking, almost as God, through the agents of Satan in the world, pounds His kingdom in history. Nevertheless, the yeast does its marvelous work, *just so long as the fires of the oven are not lit prematurely*. If the full heat of the oven is applied to the dough before the yeast has done its work, both the yeast and the dough perish in the flames. God waits to apply the final heat (II Peter 3:9–10). First, His yeast—His church—must do its work, in time and on earth. The kingdom of God (which includes the institutional church, but is broader than the institutional church) must rise, having "incor-

60. North, *Priorities and Dominion*, ch. 12.

rupted" the satanic dough of the kingdom of Satan with the gospel of life, including the life-giving reconstruction of all the institutions of culture.

What a marvelous description of God's kingdom! Christians work inside the cultural material available in any given culture, seeking to refine it, permeate it, and make it into something fine. They know they will be successful, just as yeast is eventually successful in the dough, if it is given sufficient time to do its work. This is what God implicitly promises us in the analogy of the leaven: *enough time to accomplish our individual and collective assignments*. He tells us that His kingdom will produce the desirable bread of life. It will take time. It may take several poundings, as God, through the hostility of the world, kneads the yeast-filled dough of men's cultures.[61] But the end result is guaranteed. God does not intend to burn His bread to a useless crisp by prematurely placing it in the oven. He is a better baker than that.

2. The Symbolism of Communion

Christians should not eat unleavened bread exclusively at their celebrations of the Lord's Supper. They should eat large chunks of leavened bread, delighting in the flavor and its ability to fill them. This is what God says His kingdom is like. *The leavened bread is a symbol of God's patience with us, a symbol of His restraint*. As Peter wrote, concerning the fiery judgment to come at the last judgment, God is not slack concerning his promise, "but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9b). He delays the application of fire to the earth (II Peter 3:10). As Christians celebrating the Lord's Supper, we look toward the future, toward the effects of our labors, in time and on earth. We are God's yeast, inevitably permeating the whole loaf, until the risen dough is ready for the final fire. *God does not intend to throw the dough into the fire prematurely*. He does not intend to burn up the work of His hands. He allows us to make our peace offering. Christ was the firstfruits offering (I Cor. 15:20), yet so are we, every man in his own order (I Cor. 15:23).[62]

It could be argued that we should eat both unleavened and leav-

61. I am using the analogy of pounding the dough to apply to historical circumstances. It is a suggestive analogy, not necessarily an inescapable implication of the biblical text.

62. North, *Judgment and Dominion*, ch. 16.

ened bread at the communion table. The symbol of discontinuity may still be ritually legitimate: the decisive break with sin at the cross, when the lamb was slain. But a communion table with only unleavened bread conflicts with the symbolism of Christ's church (His body), which has the task of building His kingdom. "This is my body," He said (Matt. 26:26). But if the church is His body (I Cor. 12:12–14),[63] then how can this body remain flat (unleavened) in history, if it is to replace Satan's evil leaven? Churches must strive to make the symbolism of the Lord's Supper clear to Christ's people, and unleavened flat bread, if eaten without leavened bread, conveys the symbolism of historical and cultural impotence.[64] To use both unleavened and leavened bread, unless the congregation has sophisticated instructors and members with a taste for biblical theology and biblical symbolism, is to risk confusion. If we eat one type of bread only, let it be leavened bread.

"Unleavened wine," meaning grape juice, never had a place in the symbolism of the Old Testament offerings. Contrary to the opinion of some commentators, *wine is fermented*. Jesus' metaphor of the wine and wineskins makes this clear: new wine breaks old wineskins (Matt. 9:17). To break wineskins, it has to be fermenting. There is no ritual significance for grape juice in the New Testament. It is not a symbol of discontinuity, as unleavened bread is. It is not a biblical symbol at all. *Grape juice* may, however, be the symbol for the church that is most preferred by Satan, symbolizing *the historical impotence of the church* —a new wine that breaks nothing because it is not wine at all.

Let us eat sitting down. Let us eat no bitter herbs. Instead, *let us spread our leavened bread with honey*. The basis of our victory is past; let us look forward with confidence. *Victory is sweet*. Let Satan's troops eat bitter herbs, not Christ's troops. The church has never eaten bitter herbs at the Lord's Supper.[65]

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63. *Ibid*., ch. 15.

64. It is true that Jesus ate unleavened bread at the Last Supper. It is also true that He had not yet suffered and died, thereby fulfilling the ethical demands of the Old Testament's sacrificial system, and thereby also abolishing it for all time. He had also not yet risen from the dead. The day He rose from the dead, the historical and cultural impotence of ancient Israel was at last definitively broken, even as new wine breaks old wineskins. Pentecost pointed to this definitive break with the old covenant's defensive mentality and rituals.

65. Why were the Israelites required to eat bitter herbs? To remind them of the horrors of cultural bondage to a foreign, anti-God power. The threat of another period of bondage was always before them. But from the day of Christ's resurrection, the old geographical and cultural wineskins were broken. The church is on the offensive internationally, for the ethical requirements of God have been met, in time and on earth.

Some churches still insist on unleavened bread exclusively. Those who argue that the communion feast should be celebrated with unleavened bread point to I Corinthians 5, which I cited earlier, where Paul writes:

> Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (I Cor. 5:6–8).

Several comments are in order. First, Paul was dealing with sin in the Corinthian church. When he spoke of purging out the old leaven, he was referring to a specific individual, a man who was practicing incest (I Cor. 5:1–5). Second, the word "bread" was added by the translators of the King James Version. It is not in Paul's text. Third, he told us to celebrate the Lord's Table with the unleaven of sincerity and truth—a definitive, discontinuous break from Satan's insincerity and lies. This "unleaven" is the starting point of ethical and cultural maturation. *It is the "old leaven" that is forbidden*. This is the same imagery that was basic to Passover. It was the old leaven of Egypt that was forbidden. Israel had to make a symbolic break with the religion and culture of Egypt before leaving Egypt for the land of Canaan. *Unleavened bread in this instance symbolized the discontinuity with sin that God's deliverance represents*. (I have already referred Calvin's comments on this passage. He did not use the passage to advocate the use of unleavened bread during communion. He used it to drive home the ethical implications of the communion feast.) The fourth comment is simply that Paul also referred to Christ as the *firstfruits*, and this involved a *leavened offering*. Paul held to both images. Thus, to insist on unleavened bread as alone symbolically valid for the communion table is to claim too much. To the extent that churches want the communion celebration to point forward to victory, leavened bread is far more preferable.

K. The Final Revolution

There will be another great discontinuity, in time and on earth. It will come on the heels of long years of continuity. This next revolution of prophetic significance is Satan's final attempt to throw off godly rule (Rev. 20:3). It will be grounded in *a continuity of despair*. Satan's

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Definitive ethical victory is behind us, once and for all.

despairing forces will vainly attempt to throw off the continuity of godly rule. It will be a perverse image of the exodus. The Hebrews had experienced generations of ungodly servitude to the gods of Egypt, through the representatives of the gods, the pharaohs. They were pushed into rebellion after generations of despair. Neither they nor their Egyptian masters had expected this revolt to be successful. Satan's rebellion will come in much the same way, except that it will be *an active rebellion perversely directed against the visible manifestations of the benefits of godly rule*. Unlike the Hebrew rebellion, it will be cut short in rapid order (Rev. 20:9).

The forces of Satan will acknowledge as binding the terms of the peace treaty, but they will secretly resist them. They will organize their forces for the final rebellion. Their sins will be that much greater, for they will heap coals upon their heads by rebelling in the face of the visible blessings of God (Pr. 25:21–22;[66] Rom. 12:20[67]). It is our responsibility, as agents of the victorious commander, to dispense justice, thereby calling forth the external blessings that will condemn the rebels to their well-deserved punishment. The steady extension of godly rule will have its long-term effects, in time and on earth. These effects will have implications throughout eternity: *training for dominion* by the saints, and *training for defeat* by the rebels.

We should not expect a great discontinuity in training for either camp. We should not expect endless external defeat for the spiritual army of a victorious commander, Jesus Christ, only to have victory handed over on a silver platter to troops that have proven themselves totally incompetent for thousands of years. We should also not expect to see endless victories for Satan, only to have victory snatched away from his troops in the final moments of the ancient contest. Our victory is past: Calvary. Their defeat is past: Calvary. *History is a progressive working out of the implications of Calvary's crucial discontinuity*. We should not expect to see the progressive historical defeat of the implicit victors, members of Christ's church, nor should we expect to see the progressive historical victory of the implicit losers.[68] What we should expect to see is the Satanists' equivalent of the exodus: a desperate rebellion by a people who had experienced generations of

66. Gary North, *Wisdom and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Proverbs*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2007] 2012), ch. 75.

67. North, *Cooperation and Dominion*, ch. 10.

68. Gary North, "Common Grace, Eschatology, and Biblical Law," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, III (Winter 1976–77). Cf. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987).

rule by their enemies.[69]

Let the Satanists celebrate their communion standing up, staffs in hand. Those staffs were broken at Calvary. We are seated on the thrones of judgment in history, and we shall dispense continual justice, making their final revolt all the less justified, all the more culpable, and all the more unsuccessful. *The continuity of the word of God will bring external cultural victory, step by step*. "But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken" (Isa. 28:13). The enemies of God cannot survive the steady onslaught of God's people, as the latter progressively fulfill the terms of the dominion covenant.[70]

Conclusion

Passover points to a radical break with evil. The leaven of the world—sin, death, and corruption—is not to be the ethical foundation of God's kingdom. Unleavened bread symbolized this radical ethical discontinuity with Egypt and Egypt's gods and culture. Bitter herbs symbolized the grim reality of life under the dominion of Satan and his representatives. God called the Israelites to obey His law. Obedience to God's law was to become the foundation of a new civilization. At the feast of Pentecost, they were to celebrate the founding of this new civilization, and they were to use leavened bread in this ritual.

To accomplish the liberation of Israel from the bondage of sin, represented by Egyptian civilization, God destroyed Egypt. The av-enger of blood gained vengeance for the blood-stained land on Passover night. *A radical historical discontinuity* was the event that drove the Israelites out of bondage and toward the land of Canaan. This, in turn, was designed to bring the *continuity of the maturation process*. Ethical conformity to God over time produces this continuity of growth, both personally and culturally.

The ethical discontinuity of sin brings the historical discontinuity of God's judgment. Adam learned this lesson when God expelled him from the garden; the people of Noah's day learned it; and so did Pharaoh, though only in his last minutes in a watery grave. *God cuts off the leaven of sin in history*, so that the leaven of righteousness can develop and become the dominant cultural force.

69. North, *Unconditional Surrender*, pp. 300–2

70. *Ibid*., ch. 10.

The biblical concept of social change is therefore grounded in the doctrines of creation, ethical rebellion, redemption, dominion, and final judgment. In short, *the Bible teaches a doctrine of linear time*. We are both pushed and pulled through time, and not by impersonal forces, but by a personal God. God's declared and inescapable future draws us through present history, but always by way of the past. What has gone before has its influence over us, but so also does all that is yet to come. *The link between past and future is responsible decision-making, primarily by God and secondarily by men*.

The exodus was a discontinuous event, yet the covenantal life of Israel was to be renewed annually by a continuing series of Passover meals down through the ages. The great discontinuous event (for it is essentially one event) of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ took place once and only once, yet the Communion meals that announce His definitive triumph over death and evil are to be continually celebrated by His people through the ages. In short, *a definitive and completed past event*—a discontinuity—is to be celebrated continuously through history, for *it points to a definitive final event in the future: the final judgment*. This next great discontinuity becomes the foundation of the great future continuity: the New Heavens and New Earth (Rev. 21, 22).

History is therefore equally influenced both by discontinuities and continuities, the "one great event" and the "many little events." *History is simultaneously one and many*. In this sense, history reflects the being of God, which is simultaneously one and many. But above all, *historical change is personal*: God proposes, God disposes, and men are fully responsible (Rom. 9:10–24).

In a world of cosmic personalism, the "great men" theory of history is valid. Great men do produce historical discontinuities that are crucial. But they make these changes within a framework of historical continuity. They become crucial as pivotal characters precisely because there is a broad historical milieu that is ready to be pivoted. The "great man" is nothing without the "little men," past and present, who have participated in the development of the historical setting that at last makes a radical break with the past.

The *continuity of biblical law* is an important aspect of historical continuity. It is man's tool of dominion, and the measure by which man is either blessed or judged. It speaks to men in all eras because man is still made in God's image in all eras. Thus, it true, as the French proverb says, that "the more things change, the more they stay the same."

It is also true that as things stay the same—man's creaturehood, God's law—the more things are able to change.

The radical discontinuity in a person's individual life is ethical: from death unto life, from the old creature to the new creature, from condemnation to blessing, from rebellion to obedience, from covenant-breaking to covenant-keeping. Without this discontinuity, every man stands condemned by the original discontinuity of Adam's ethical rebellion. Adam inaugurated a continuity of death by his act of rebellion. The continuity of spiritual death will otherwise prevail in each person's life apart from the discontinuity of regeneration.

The *discontinuity of regeneration* has been the same discontinuity that has prevailed from the day of Adam's sin. It has created a rival continuity: the *continuity of life*. This continuity has many institutional forms, but the chief one is the church. The basis of this regenerational discontinuity has always been the grace of God, which in turn is made possible by the greatest of all discontinuities: the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

As this regenerational discontinuity takes place in more and more lives, the continuity of growth in the kingdom of God is revealed. In short, *a series of radical ethical discontinuities in individual lives produces Christian cultural and civilizational continuity*. Biblical revival is therefore radically different from revivalism. Revivalism promotes an emotional personal break from an existing social order, but not the transformation of that order. Biblical revival is a comprehensive, all-encompassing, civilization-transforming revival.[71] It comes by means of a series of rapid multiple ethical discontinuities—personal ethical discontinuities—that combine to create a historic civilizational discontinuity. Biblical revival lays the foundation of *Christian civilization's continuity*. It lays the foundation, in short, of the visible manifestation of the dominion covenant.

71. Gary North, "The Pressing Need for Revival," *Christian Reconstruction*, VI (Nov./Dec. 1984)

13

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.

EXODUS 12:30–32

The theocentric principle here is the absolute sovereignty of God in the affairs of men.

A. The Final Confrontation

The Pharaoh and his people had been subjected to the final humiliation, they believed. They had suffered plague after plague, and their priests had been impotent to combat them. The Pharaoh himself, the great god of Egypt, had now lost his son, heir to divinity. The gods of Egypt had been decisively defeated by the God of Moses and Aaron. Surely their defeat was total. The Israelites had won.

The Israelites then took their belongings, packed them up, and made ready to depart. They collected the tribute of the Egyptians, who pressed them to leave. The tribute money was paid; restitution was made. The slaves were now officially free men. They had been visibly returned to bondage under God, which is the sole the basis of human freedom.

This capitulation on the part of Pharaoh was not to last long. His defeat was not yet total. He still had his life, his army, his chariots, and his authority. Egypt still had sovereignty over the land; possibly

Egypt still maintained considerable sovereignty in Canaan, although Courville's dating of the exodus, coupled with his reconstruction of the dynasties, indicates that the Pharaoh of the exodus was much weaker than the Pharaoh of the late Twelfth Dynasty who had first enslaved the Hebrews. Pharaoh was once again about to reverse himself and seek a victory over the departing slaves, and this proved to be the final humiliation for him, and also for Egypt, which was defeated by the invading Hyksos (Amalekites) and subjugated for at least a century, and possibly four—about twice the duration of Israel's stay in Egypt.

Pharaoh knew precisely what his surrender implied. The gods of Egypt had been decisively defeated. Pharaoh had been driven to capitulate completely to the demands of Moses and Moses' God. This God had demanded that Pharaoh allow the whole nation of Israel to journey three days in order to sacrifice to Him. Now God had been able to extract His demands from Pharaoh. Pharaoh was implicitly admitting that the Egyptian theology was a myth, that there is no continuity of being between man and God, that there is a God so great and so powerful that He can extract His every demand from mighty Egypt, the center of the earth. Here was a God unlike any ever encountered by Pharaoh.

Pharaoh also understood what Egypt's sin against the Hebrews had been. They had enslaved Israel, breaking their treaty with Israel and Israel's God. They had treated Israel as a concubine, a slave wife. They had stolen Israel's dowry, the land of Goshen. There was restitution to pay. Pharaoh, however, did not want to pay all that he owed. He wanted one last admission on the part of the Hebrews that he was not really guilty. He wanted Moses to bless him.

How could this man have hoped for one moment that the God of Israel might bless him? How could he have imagined that God would regard him as anything but a lawless rebel? Was Pharaoh at last asking for mercy? Was he at last humbling himself before the God of the Israelites? Was his request for a blessing a sign of his repentance? The answer is unconditionally no to all these questions. What was Pharaoh really asking for? He was asking for *God's seal of approval* on his actions as a monarch, the master of Egypt. He was asking for God's sanction as a *lawful former master over Israel*. He was trying to justify his tyranny and his continual lying. He was trying to cover himself with the protecting law of God, but without humbling himself before that law. He was trying to get God to acknowledge publicly that Pha-

raoh's acts of charity—which were in fact tribute payments extracted by God's awesome power—entitled him to God's protection.

B. The Year of Release

The law of God respecting Hebrew slaves placed specific requirements on the Hebrew masters. Pharaoh must have understood the basic principle of lawful slave ownership. "And if thy brother, an Hebrew man or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty. Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him" (Deut. 15:12–14). It is revealing that the justification of this law was the bondage they had experienced in Egypt: "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing today" (Deut. 15:15).

1. Blessing for Evil

Pharaoh wanted to be recognized as a lawful master, for he was giving liberally of Egypt's wealth. Was he not treating the Hebrews honestly, as a brother might treat them? In fact, it was God's responsibility to bless him, for he was adhering to the law: "It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee: for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest" (Deut. 15:18). The blessing, Pharaoh insisted. Where is the blessing?

Pharaoh the slavemaster, Pharaoh the kidnapper, Pharaoh the treaty-breaker, Pharaoh the slave-wife-divorcer, and Pharaoh the divine ruler was once again demanding to be recognized as a sovereign. He was arguing that he and his predecessors had possessed the right to violate all of the laws concerning lawful servitude, enslaving the Israelites unlawfully, just as surely as Potiphar threw Joseph into prison unlawfully. He had conducted himself lawfully, he implied, and now his payment to the Israelites testified, he wanted God to admit, to his position as a covenant-keeper. Facing a victorious slave population and their victorious God, Pharaoh wanted to be justified by works: his liberality in giving the Hebrews their seventh-year payment. This was not tribute. This was not restitution. This was not the restoration of the stolen dowry. This was simply lawful payment for lawful slaveown-

ing, which had been conducted by a well-meaning brother in the faith. He wanted all the promised benefits of the law, the blessing in "all that thou doest," in return for this final payment to Israel. If he could get God's blessing, his payment would wipe the slate clean. God would be testifying to the legitimacy of Egypt's past rule over His people.

Pharaoh was not offering unconditional surrender to God. Once again, he was bargaining with God. This time, he used the law of God to try to justify his actions. Instead of flatly denying the right of Israel to sacrifice to God, or denying Israel the right to take along wives, or children, or cattle, he was now denying the legitimacy of any judicial case that God might bring against him as a rebellious, law-denying sovereign. He was asking God to sanction all of his past transgressions, including his unwillingness to grant the Hebrews the right to worship their God. But if these earlier transgressions were not really illegitimate, then God would have to sanction Pharaoh's original argument, namely, that he had been a lawful sovereign during the period of the subjugation. In fact, he was asking for God's sanction on the whole era of enslavement. He wanted his blessing; he was paying for it "fair and square." God owed him this blessing.

2. Restitution

God did not grant him a blessing. Pharaoh was paying restitution, and he was paying it under extreme duress. He would gain no blessing from God; he would have no stamp of approval on his actions as a self-proclaimed divine monarch. He was not going to be able to buy his way out of judgment. He still had not recognized the nature of the God he was dealing with.

God warned Moses as they were leaving Egypt: "For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" (Ex. 14:3–5).[1]

1. The phrase, "entangled in the land," is expressive of the labyrinth concept which dominated Egyptian and ancient pagan thought. The Hebrews' wandering in the wilderness did become an entanglement—an ethical entanglement, rather than a physical entanglement. On the labyrinth, see Appendix C: "The Labyrinth and the Garden."

Pharaoh covenantally represented his subordinates well. The Egyptians were not innocent victims of a misguided leader who did not represent them ethically and spiritually. They advised him to pursue the fleeing Hebrews. They had not learned, and they had not humbled themselves before God for their generations of sinful dealing with the Israelites. They had not yet received God's final verdict on the assertion of Egypt's continuity-of-being theology. They had not yet surrendered unconditionally.

C. Dominion and Surrender: Unconditional but Progressive

God requires unconditional surrender from mankind. He does not offer terms of permanent peace on anything other than full, unconditional surrender.[2]

1. Terms of Surrender

God's dealings with the Egyptians and the Canaanites were about to demonstrate, for all the world to see, just how unconditional His terms of surrender are. Egypt faced at least a century of submission to foreign rulers, and most of the cities of Canaan faced absolute annihilation. The Canaanites understood this when Israel crossed the Red Sea, as Rahab told the spies (Josh. 2:9–11). *Men must submit themselves to God as their lawful, absolute master, or else they perish*. The terms of surrender are stated in His covenant of law: ethical perfection.[3] However, because no one except Jesus Christ is perfect before God, a sacrifice has been prepared, so that those relying on it might be justified by God and adopted back into God's family (Rom. 8:29–30;

2. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010).

3. It is misleading to redefine the Bible's definition of ethical perfection to mean simply spiritual maturity. Maturity implies ethical progress through time, and progress implies movement toward a fixed ethical standard. This standard is perfection. The perfection of the Bible is definitive as well as progressive. It is important to consider usage when we read that Noah was perfect (Gen. 6:9), or most notably of all, that Job was perfect and upright (Job. 1:1). The Bible does not teach perfectionism that men can attain ethical perfection in time and on earth. But it does teach that Jesus Christ did attain ethical perfection in time and on earth. Christ's perfect conformity to the law of God, in time and on earth, is the foundation of the regenerate person's definitive sanctification, as well as his progressive sanctification. On this point, see North, *Unconditional Surrender*, pp. 51–52. Any discussion of perfection as either exclusively definitive or exclusively progressive is incomplete. On the heresy of perfectionism, see B. B. Warfield, *Perfectionism*, either the abridged one-volume version published by Presbyterian and Reformed (1954) or the two-volume set published originally by Oxford University Press in 1931, and reprinted in 1981 by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Eph. 1:4–5). The passage of His people out of bondage and through the Red Sea was symbolic of the salvation offered by God to His people. The failure of the Egyptians to prevent their escape testified to Canaan and to all the nations of the futility of challenging God by challenging God's people.

Dominion comes through adherence to the terms of God's covenant of peace. Pharaoh attempted to achieve dominion over Israel by defying God and denying the terms of unconditional surrender. He tried to buy God's acceptance by offering tribute money to the Hebrews, but also by implying that this was nothing more than a lawful payment, voluntarily given to lawfully enslaved brothers. Pharaoh wanted God's blessing on Egypt's statist order, for he still believed that He was the divine-human link. Not so, God declared. There would be no blessing on the terms laid down by Pharaoh. Pharaoh once again failed to gain any sort of compromise from God. The God of Israel was implacable except to those who acknowledged His lawful authority as a true slave-master. When Israel later refused to acknowledge this from time to time, God gave them into the hands of other slave-masters, like the archetypal slave-masters of Egypt. Pharaoh could not obtain what Israel, God's own people, could never obtain: an admission from God of the legitimacy of partial surrender to His authority.

God's requirement of unconditional surrender is ethical. "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17:1). "Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God" (Deut. 18:13). "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). The standard of perfection is the standard met by Jesus Christ and imputed to His people by grace (Rom. 5:13–19). There can be no compromise here: perfection means *definitive perfection*.[4]

What about *progressive perfection*, or the process of spiritual maturation? God, by His grace, honors this process. The terms of the covenant are unquestionably conditional: if men do this, then God will give that. He honors the terms of His covenant, not because men have performed innately righteous acts perfectly, but because Jesus Christ did, and by seeking to imitate Christ and Christ's perfect humanity (but not His divinity), men become the recipients of God's blessings, in time and on earth.

4. See footnote #3.

Covenant-keeping men cannot command God's blessings in the way that a magician thinks he can command blessings from occult forces, namely, on the basis of some precisely performed ritual. God is not bound by some autonomous cosmic order to respond automatically to the requests of men, including covenant-keeping men. Whatever men receive from God is by God's grace, since fallen men cannot claim to be in absolute and unconditional subordination to God, that is, totally righteous. But God's moral universe is orderly (common grace), so there are cause-and-effect relationships between righteousness (covenant-keeping) and prosperity. This orderliness is no less a matter of grace than God's imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness to His people. It is a world-ordering grace.

God instructed Israel to destroy utterly the Canaanites (Deut. 7:16–24). It was failure on Israel's part that resulted in the failure of their mission (Jud. 1:21–36). They did not utterly destroy the cities of Canaan. Why was this total destruction required by God? Because God was establishing a new base of operations for Israel, one which was to have been unpolluted by foreign gods. Once established in the land, however, the Israelites were not to demand the unconditional and immediate surrender of every pagan nation. They were to offer *terms of peace*, which might involve perpetual servitude, to nations far away from Canaan (Deut. 20:10–15).[5] Furthermore, Israel was not supposed to have a standing army, meaning a king who multiplies horses, which are too easily used in offensive military operations (Deut. 17:16).[6] Conquest was by means of God's word, as Jonah the prophet was instructed to deliver to Nineveh. The "clean sweep" in Canaan was unique in Israel's history, and even here, the terms of God's unconditional surrender were not successfully imposed, for these terms required totally faithful servants. The imposition of the terms of unconditional surrender by God's people demanded *unconditional faithfulness* on their part. They failed.

Christ, however, was unconditionally faithful to God, and therefore He was able to impose these terms on Satan at the cross. *The extension of His terms of surrender is what the New Testament era is all about*. The steady encroaching on Satan's fallen kingdom is what *the preaching of the gospel and the establishment of Christian institutions*, governed by God's law, are intended to accomplish. God's terms are still un-

5. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 48.

6. *Ibid*., ch. 42.

conditional; men must surrender totally to God, either before they die (or, in the case of the final generation, before Christ comes in judgment), or else after they die (or after Christ comes in judgment). Eventually, all mankind will surrender unconditionally. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9–11). In time and on earth, however, not every knee will bow, and among those who formally bow themselves before Christ, not every heart will bow. The principle of unconditional surrender is nonetheless valid even before the final judgment. It will not be *consummately* extended in history by fallen men, but as the followers of Christ progressively conform themselves to Christ's image, to a greater and greater extent, the preaching of the gospel and the construction of institutions based on the full application of biblical law will extend Christ's kingdom: *progressive* unconditional surrender, the working out in history of the *definitive* unconditional surrender of Jesus Christ to God the Father.

2. Pharaoh's Negotiations

It is part of Satan's imitation kingdom that he, too, requires unconditional surrender. He wants men to bow to him and worship him, which is what he demanded of Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4:9).[7] Pharaoh seemed to compromise with Moses, but at no stage was he asking for anything less than unconditional surrender from God, for Pharaoh asked God to sanction the idea that Pharaoh had some trace of divinity in him, that he represented true divinity in the continuity of being between God and man. God refused to compromise, for anything less than total sovereignty on His part is a denial of who He is and what He is. Satan wants "just a speck" of sovereignty, so that he can successfully deny that God is who God says that He is. This is not unconditional surrender to God, for it requires that God deny Himself. In effect, it would be the unconditional surrender of God to Satan, for by having testified falsely concerning both Satan and Himself, God would thereby have sinned against Satan. He would have borne false witness concerning the nature of divinity and false witness against His maligned (not malignant) neighbor.

7. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 3.

False testimony concerning the nature of God is a capital offense. This challenge to the validity of God's self-testimony was the very heart of Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve: an assertion that God had testified falsely concerning God, man, and reality.[8]

After Pharaoh finally allowed the Hebrews to depart in total triumph, without maintaining a shred of original sovereignty for himself or the Egyptian state, he raced after the Hebrews in a rage. Why had he let them go? Didn't they know who he was? Didn't they know what Egypt was? Didn't they know that he represented man's divinity in this world? He would show them. He would bring them low. Every Hebrew knee would bow to him, for they had not allowed him even a trace of sovereignty. They had wanted him to surrender unconditionally to their God and therefore to them, given the Egyptian theology of the continuity of being, although God allowed him to keep his kingdom. But it was the principle of the thing that concerned him. If they were going to demand unconditional surrender by him to their God in principle, then he was going to demand visible unconditional surrender from them once again. He was going to drag them back. They would not go free. They would not sacrifice to any God who would not acknowledge at least a degree of independent sovereignty to Pharaoh and his state. It would be a fight to the finish. It turned out to be just exactly that.

Pagan kingdoms implicitly want unconditional surrender from their enemies. Lawless men want the same. As men grow more arrogant, as they attempt to divorce themselves from the concept of lawful dominion under the restraints of God's law, they adopt policies of unconditional surrender, in time and on earth. They launch sneak attacks, in violation of Deuteronomy 20:10–15, as the Japanese did against the Russians in 1904 and as they did against the United States in December of 1941. Pagan governments demand unconditional surrender, as the Allies demanded from Germany, Italy, and Japan in the Second World War.[9] In short, they want "a fight to the finish," just as Pharaoh wanted when he pursued the Israelites into the Red Sea. They seek to be free of the restraints of God's law in order to impose a law-order which violates God's law.

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8. Gary North, "Witnesses and Judges," *Biblical Economics Today*, VI (Aug./Sept. 1983). Reprinted in Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Appendix E.

9. Ann Armstrong, *Unconditional Surrender* (Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1961).

Conclusion

Unconditional surrender is an inescapable concept: the question is, "Surrender to whom?" Will it be surrender to God, progressively through time, until the final day of judgment, when surrender will be absolute and unconditional? Or will it be surrender to Satan's kingdom, in time and on earth, through Satan's radical breaks in the continuities of history, the wars and conquests of his earthly kingdoms, all of which are at war with God's kingdom and His law? Satan wants a final break with history in history, a radical break with the sovereignty of God. He wants the abolition of history, for history testifies to his failure, in time, at the cross. He wants the unconditional surrender of time to revolutionary chaos or static timelessness, where the progressive, linear extension of God's kingdom will be overcome. Satan imitates God by demanding total, immediate, temporal surrender.

The argument favoring discontinuous breaks in history was valid when the static kingdoms of the ancient world faced the discontinuity represented by Israel. But now the church is bringing God's peace treaty to the nations. There are minor discontinuities, as nations rise and fall, but the next biblically significant discontinuity is Satan's final rebellion and Christ's return in judgment. At that point, unconditional surrender will be required. The kingdom will be delivered, in completed form, to the Father (I Cor. 15:24). The history of fallen, rebellious man will end. Until that time, it is the *continuity of God's progressive dominion*, through the preaching of the gospel and the construction of institutions imposing God's law, that is the criterion of historical change. It is the *steady extension of Christ's kingdom*, not the desperate discontinuities of Satan's kingdoms, with their treaties of *immediate unconditional surrender*, that is the basis of historical change.

There will be one final, all-out attempt by Satan to avoid total surrender. Then will come the return of Christ in full power and judgment. It will be the death knell of Satan's kingdom, in time, on earth, and in eternity (Rev. 20). All satanic imitations of this great discontinuity of God's final judgment will wind up as Pharaoh's attempted discontinuity in covenantal history wound up: buried in the depths of the sea.

Satan's theology is the religion of revolution, and it cannot survive the steady, implacable onslaught of God's theology of progressive dominion. It is not the minor discontinuities of history that serve as our criteria of victory, but the steadiness of the word of God: "But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept

upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken" (Isa. 28:13). God used discontinuities in history to smash the kingdoms of the ancient world: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it to him" (Ezek. 21:27). Give what? The diadem of power (Ezek. 21:26). God still overturns Satan's kingdoms, but by the steady expansion of the gospel age, the progressive dominion of God's law and God's people, in time and on earth. Christians' task is to lay the groundwork for a new kingdom, built on the foundation of God's law—which is to govern every human institution—by God's grace, which is applied to the heart of every Christian (Heb. 8:7–13). *The New Testament does not teach a religion of social revolution, but a religion of ethical regeneration, restitution, and repentance*.

While Christianity preaches the tactics of social continuity during its "minority religion" phase—go the extra mile with your enemy, turn the other cheek—it nevertheless is a religion of social transformation. The Christian revolution takes place in the hearts and minds of men—the place where all revolutions begin. The opponents of Christianity recognize that Christianity is indeed a religion of total transformation. To them, the ethical discontinuity between the Old Adam and the New Adam represents a revolutionary doctrine. It threatens them with the destruction of their anti-Christian civilization.

The Roman emperors launched a series of bloody, though intermittent, persecutions against the early church because they recognized the all-or-nothing nature of the confrontation. It was either Christ or Caesar. The Roman state was quite willing to tolerate any religion which acknowledged the divinity (or genius) of the emperor. Christians refused. They paid a heavy price. But Rome paid a heavier price in the long run. So did Egypt.

14

THE RULE OF LAW

And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, *let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.*

EXODUS 12:48–49

The theocentric focus of this passage is the authority of biblical law: the third point of the biblical covenant.[1] Access to Passover was by confession of faith and circumcision. The circumcised stranger and his household had access to Passover.

A. Subordination to Biblical Law

The Passover was closed to outsiders who had not been circumcised. A man's slave, if he had been purchased with money and subsequently circumcised, had the obligation of participating in the Passover rites (Ex. 12:44). He had a place in the family and was under the sovereignty of God, through his master. The mark of subordination was in his flesh. In contrast, the foreigner and hired servant were excluded from Passover, since they had not visibly (physiologically) humbled themselves before God, and were therefore not part of the covenant: "There shall no stranger eat thereof: But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof"

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992), ch. 3. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), ch. 3.

(12:43b–45). No foreigner could eat leavened bread anywhere in Israel during Passover week (12:19). Any stranger who wished to participate in Passover could do so, if he and all the males of his household were circumcised (12:48). This indicated his *subordination to God* and His *dominion in the name of God* over his own household. A circumcised stranger was to be treated as one born in the land, although it is unclear how he could ever have lawfully owned rural land permanently, because of the redistribution back to the original family owners, which was required at the Jubilee year (Lev. 25:10).[2]

The rites of circumcision and Passover were simple enough. Biblical law in Israel was public. In fact, it had to be read in its entirety every seventh year in front of the assembled nation:

> And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it (Deut. 31:9–13).[3]

The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. He is the Creator. As such, He owns the whole world. He commands respect from all men, and the terms of His law are binding on all men. *The stranger within Israel's gates, no less than the priests, had to honor the law*. There was no mystery about the law. While some things are known only to God (Deut. 29:29), these secret matters are as closed to the priests as to the stranger. Public law was in principle open to every resident in the land of Israel. The law had to be an open book for everyone to understand and observe, including the children of strangers (Deut. 31:13). The Hebrews were not to make a mistake concerning the universality of God's rule. He is not confined to one city, one nation, or one people. His rule is universal. So is biblical law, which is the judicial manifestation of His sovereign rule.

2. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), ch. 24.

3. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 75.

B. Access to Citizenship

God's law for Israel did not permit every circumcised stranger to become a full citizen immediately upon being circumcised. There were exceptions. Certain nations had been especially evil in their treatment of Israel, indicating a cultural perverseness that might take several generations to overcome in the lives of family members. The strong bond of the family covenant was acknowledged. It had taken the death of Israel's exodus generation to cleanse their families of the cultural legacy of Egypt; such a legacy remained a potential threat to Israel from newly circumcised pagans. Thus, it took three generations for circumcised Egyptians and Edomites (the heirs of Esau) to become full citizens (Deut. 23:7–8). Second, it took ten generations for Ammonites and Moabites:

> An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever. Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee (Deut. 23:3–4).

The language here is incomplete. We need other passages to help us understand. Does it say that they could become citizens in the tenth generation or does it say that they are banned forever? Was "forever" understood to mean a nearly permanent ban against them—to the tenth generation—or was it in fact permanent?

We read in Nehemiah 13: "On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing" (vv. 1–2). I believe that this use of "forever" was figurative; it meant 10 generations. We are given an analogous prohibition in the case of bastardy. Bastards were also prevented from entering the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation (Deut. 23:2). The most conspicuous example of the enforcement of this restriction is seen in the adultery of Judah and Tamar (Gen. 38), which produced Pharez and Zarah. They were bastards in terms of God's law. David was the tenth in the line of those born of Pharez.[4] He became king.

4. The named generations were: Pharez, Hezron, Ram, Amminidab, Nahshon, Salm-

Despite this prohibition against Moabites, Ruth became a respected member of the covenant, though not a full citizen; she was a woman of humility and faithfulness. She even became the great grandmother of David and an ancestor of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5). The grace of God is our standard; full ethical conformity to God's covenant, through faith in God's grace (Hab. 2:4), overcomes the general restrictions against the greatest sinners. Ruth's covenant was secured in a three-fold manner: through her marriage to her first husband, a Hebrew; through her faithfulness to her mother-in-law, Naomi; and through her marriage to her second husband, Boaz. She was in subjection to him, as she had been in subjection to the other two. Her children were counted as Israelites, although not as members of the congregation, because of Boaz's position as an heir of Pharez.[5] But her great grandson—the third generation—became the king; therefore, any general prohibition on her heirs from serving as judges to the tenth generation was overcome by her marriage to Boaz.

It might be argued that Ruth is not an adequate example, since as a woman, she could never have exercised political or judicial office. Possibly; but the ban would have applied to her male heirs. Furthermore, it is instructive that this was a marriage between a politically restricted Moabite and an equally restricted heir of a bastard. It was part of the most important covenantal line in Israel—indeed, the most important in all history. It produced David, and it eventually produced Jesus (Matt. 1; Luke 3). *Therefore, the crucial issue is ethics, not genetics. The covenant is fundamentally ethical.* Those who were under the ban were under it because of the transgressions of their forebears. But this ban could be overcome through righteousness over time. *Time is a means of testing covenantal faithfulness and external performance across generations.*

Neither genetics nor time was ever determinative in the covenant

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on, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David (Ruth 4:18–22). The listed line of Judah was Pharez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, and Nahshon. Nahshon was a contemporary of Moses (Num. 1:7). Thus, only four generations are listed in between Nahshon and David: Salmon, who married Rahab (Matt. 1:5), Boaz (who married Ruth), Obed, Jesse, and then David. This list is clearly incomplete. It is symbolic. The time between Pharez and David was over six centuries.

5. A member of the congregation could serve as a judge or elder. It is fitting that the restoration of this family, through God's grace, came with David, the most powerful ruler in Israel's history. This tends to support the idea that being cut off from the congregation did not mean religious excommunication—prohibiting participation in the rituals of Israel—but rather separation from rulership, meaning separation from dominion through service in the civil government.

structure. The covenantal grafting in of the gentiles through faith in Christ alienated the Pharisees who failed to understand this fundamental principle of the covenant (Rom. 11).[6] The administrative period of ethical testing—even ten generations—had its limits. "Forever" thus was figurative in the case of citizenship for Moabites and Ammonites.

C. Covenantal Citizenship

The concept of citizenship in the Old Testament was unquestionably covenantal. This is because God had established the nation by His sovereign act of grace, and had placed all the Israelites under the rule of His covenantal law-order.

1. Restrictive Covenants

Covenants are always restrictive; they exclude even as they include. The civil covenant is also restrictive. Rushdoony commented on Israel's civil covenant.

> In Biblical law, neither equalitarianism nor an oligarchy have [sic] any standing. God as the source of law established the covenant as the principle of citizenship. Only those within the covenant are citizens. The covenant is restrictive in terms of God's law; it is also restrictive in terms of a bar against membership, which appears specifically, naming certain kinds of groups of persons. This aspect of the law is usually overlooked, because it is embarrassing to modern man. It needs therefore especial attention. In Deuteronomy 23:1–2, eunuchs are barred from citizenship; bastards are banned through the tenth generation. Ammonites and Moabites were banned through the tenth generation, or they are totally excluded, depending on the reading of the text. Edomites and Egyptians were eligible for citizenship "in their third generation"; the implication is that they are eligible after three generations of faith, after demonstrating for three generations that they believed in the covenant God and abided by His law. The throne being the ark in the tabernacle, and the tabernacle being also the central place of atonement, membership in the nation-civil and in the nation-ecclesiastical were one and the same.[7]

There is therefore a covenantal relationship between the kind of god a society believes in and the kind of citizenship that the society creates. The foundation of both the theological covenant and citizenship is *faith*.

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6. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 7.

7. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), p. 99.

> Citizenship rested on faith. Apostasy was treason. The believing alien had some kind of access to the sanctuary (II Chron. 6:32–33), at least for prayer, but this act did not give him citizenship. The alien[s]—Egyptian, Babylonian, Ethiopian, Philistine, Phoenician, and any others—could be citizens of the true or heavenly Zion, the city of God (Ps. 87), but the local Zion, Israel, was not to admit the banned groups except on God's terms. . . . Thus, it would appear from the evidence of the law that, *first*, a restrictive membership or citizenship was a part of the practice of Israel by law. . . . *Second*, the predominant fact in Israel was one law for all, irrespective of faith or national origin, that is, the absolute requirement of justice for all without respect of persons.[8]

Non-citizens were protected by God's law. This meant *protection from citizens* who might use their possession of citizenship as a means of exploiting strangers. It therefore meant *protection from oppression by the civil government*.

The legal protections ("rights") granted by biblical law to non-citizens were so comprehensive that it is difficult in retrospect to specify exactly what privileges citizens enjoyed that non-citizens did not. One possibility: not being members of any tribe, the non-citizens could not have served as judges. Foreigners were not automatically prohibited from serving in Israel's army, for David's officer, Uriah, was a Hittite, or at least his family background was Hittite (II Sam. 11:6). No privileges of citizenship are spelled out in the Old Testament that are explicitly restricted to Israelites, although there must have been such privileges, since Deuteronomy 23:3–8 provides a list of those nations whose members are prohibited from joining the "assembly" (civil, not ecclesiastical). A circumcised stranger could, however, participate in Passover (Ex. 12:48). So, it is not a simple matter to determine just what protections were not available to strangers.

2. Differing Applications

There were a few cases where the law was *applied differently* between strangers and Israelites. Two of these dealt with slavery. *First*, a stranger could become a *debt slave* as a result of some economic crisis. It was not legal for a Hebrew to make interest-bearing loans to a fellow Hebrew who was in need of a charitable loan. "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury. Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon

8. *Ibid*., pp. 99–100.

usury" (Deut. 23:19–20a).[9] This prohibition was against interest-bearing loans to the needy poor, not against loans for business endeavors in which the lender shared some of the risk. The defining factor for usury was poverty. "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury" (Ex. 22:25).[10] Strangers, however, were regarded as *slaves to foreign gods*, and therefore as *slaves to sin*. The Hebrew was allowed to charge them interest. The Hebrew also owed his tithes and offerings to God, including God's portion of any interest payments received, so the stranger in this way paid at least a portion of what he owed to God. *Second*, heathens could be purchased as permanent slaves (Lev. 25:44–46),[11] or taken as captives in war (Num. 31:9; Deut. 20:10–14.[12]) The Gibeonites, by tricking the Israelites, became permanent servants to Israel (Josh. 9). A Hebrew bondservant went free in the jubilee year (Lev. 25:39–41).[13] The stranger did not go free; he and his children remained in the Hebrew family as permanent capital assets (Lev. 25:45–46).

Third, strangers could worship foreign gods in the privacy of their households (though not publicly), but it was a capital offense for a Hebrew to do so (Deut. 13; 17:2–7). Apostasy—breaking the theological covenant—was a capital offense, but being unconverted wasn't.

Fourth, strangers could legally eat the meat of beasts that died naturally; Hebrews couldn't (Deut. 14:21).[14]

What could the purposes of the exceptions have been in the case of slavery? James Jordan's analysis is illuminating.

> Why does the law differ in regard to the unbelievers? Is this merely to symbolize the difference between a covenant people and those outside it? Not so. As the earlier chapters of this monograph demonstrated, the psychology of the unregenerate man is radically different from that of the regenerate man at the most basic level. The unbeliever is by nature an anti-dominion man, and thus lazy and unproductive. He is suicidal as well, and a rebel against all authority. He is a murderer. The Bible is realistic about this, and makes slavery a provision for the unbeliever, both for his own protection and wellbeing, and for the protection of society. Additionally, the enslavement of the heathen is, as has been noted before, an excellent means of evangelization and acculturation. There is to be one law and one

9. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 57.
10. Chapter 49.
11. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, ch. 30.
12. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 48.
13. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, ch. 29.
14. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 34.

> standard for the believer and unbeliever (Lev. 24:22); the differences in application of this one law are due to the differing psychological situations of the believer and the unbeliever.[15]

God requires one legal standard, for all men are held accountable to Him. His law specifies *differences in application*, and these differences must be respected. Nevertheless, the law did not give the Hebrew rulers the right to multiply exceptions to a straightforward application of the law. Debt and slavery were the main exceptions with respect to strangers in the land, plus the privileges and duties of citizenship, most notably (and possibly only) serving as a judge.

3. No Respect for Persons

Again and again in the books of the law, the warning and reminder is given by God concerning the rule of law for strangers: "I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God" (Lev. 25:38). He redeemed (bought back) Israel from oppression; therefore, Israel is not to become an oppressor. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 22:21; cf. 23:9; Lev. 19:33; and Deut. 10:19). The prophets also repeated this warning against oppressing strangers (Jer. 7:6–7; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5).[16]

The rule of law is established unmistakably: "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it" (Deut. 1:17). This was Moses' recapitulation of his decision

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15. James Jordan, *Slavery in Biblical Perspective* (Master's Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 1980), pp. 95–96.

16. One of the continuing themes in the writings of "liberation theologians" is the evil of oppression. They always equate oppression with economic oppression, and economic oppression with free market capitalism. What is important to consider here is the implicitly statist nature of oppression: Israel was oppressed in Egypt precisely because the Egyptians did not honor God's law. Hebrews are to honor God's law and enforce it throughout the land. The state is to be restrained by biblical law. This makes it very difficult for anyone to gain oppressive powers over others. Potential oppressors cannot gain the co-operation of public officials in applying the state's monopoly of violence against certain economic groups or organizations. When the civil government refuses to enforce God's law on all people, the result is oppression. The whole of the law must be enforced in order to avoid oppression. The liberation theologians are universally unwilling to recommend that the civil government enforce the whole of Old Testament law. Thus, they are advocates of oppressing institutions.

to create a hierarchy of judges over Israel (Ex. 18).[17] The judges must not respect persons, for they act as God's agents. God does not respect persons: "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible [God] which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Deut. 10:17–19). *This is the biblical doctrine of judicial love: we are required to render honest judgment and to bring the rule of law over all men, including the stranger*. The very next verse tells us why we must love all men in this way: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name" (Deut. 10:20).[18] Those who love God, who cleave to His name,[19] and who swear (give a binding oath) by His name, are to love His law and apply it without prejudice of persons.

The universality of God's law implies the universal responsibility of all men to obey His law. Both principles are based on the idea of *the total sovereignty of God*. By establishing a unified law code for all residents of Israel, God thereby announced His kingdom. No one was exempt. It was not a person's participation in family rites, as in Greece and Rome, which opened the courts of law to him—courts to which strangers could therefore not appeal with hope of receiving justice. The principle of justice for all is based on the principle of *God's final judgment on all*. This was seen first within the geographical confines of Israel, and all nations were to stand in awe of the legal system built on the principle of justice for all (Deut. 4:5–8).[20] The biblical principle is clear: *one God, one law-order*. Deny the universality of a single law-order, and you thereby deny a universal God. This is precisely what ancient paganism denied.

D. Pagan Citizenship

One God, one law-order: here is a principle that stood in stark contrast to the law structures of the ancient world. The pagan kingdoms of the ancient world made it exceedingly difficult for foreigners to gain citizenship, for this meant the right to participate in the religious rites

17. Chapter 19.

18. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 27.

19. The Hebrew word translated here as "cleave"—*dawbak*—means "to join to" or "cling to," the same word used in Genesis 2:24: "cleave unto his wife." It refers to a covenant.

20. *Ibid.*, ch. 8.

of the city. *Religious exclusion meant political exclusion*. It also meant exclusion from courts of law. It meant, ultimately, *exclusion from justice*. Polytheistic societies recognized the biblical principle in its reverse form: *many gods, many law-orders*. They understood that they could have no legal standing in another city's courts, for the same reason that foreigners could possess no legal standing in theirs: they worshipped different gods.

Let us consider the "democratic" city-states of the classical world, since they represent the "best case" of ancient pagan politics. Fustel de Coulanges' book, *The Ancient City* (1864), remains the classic in the field. He wrote about the link between classical (Greek and Roman) religion and politics. Religion and politics were inseparably linked. Because classical religion was essentially initiatory and mystery oriented, politics was equally based on secrecy and participation in closed rites. Unlike the closed rite of Passover, classical religion and politics were closed rites based on blood lines, meaning family lines. "As law was a part of religion, it participated in the mysterious character of all this religion of the cities. The legal formulas, like those of religion, were kept secret. They were concealed from the stranger, and even from the plebeian. This was not because the patricians had calculated that they should possess a great power in the exclusive knowledge of the law, but because the law, by its origin and nature, long appeared to be a mystery, to which one could be initiated only after having first been initiated into the national worship and the domestic worship."[21]

This meant that residence in a city was not the same as citizenship. This is a universal distinction: residency vs. citizenship. But it is possible for residents to receive the protection of civil law. This was the case in Israel, the only example in the ancient world of a political order that granted comprehensive legal protection for religious aliens. Not so in classical civilization, where there were many gods and many law-orders.

> To live in a city did not make one subject to its laws and place him under their protection; one had to be a citizen. The law did not exist for the slave; no more did it exist for the stranger.... These provisions of ancient law were perfectly logical. Law was not born of the idea of justice, but of religion, and was not conceived as going beyond it. In order that there should be a legal relation between two men, it was necessary that there should

21. Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, [1864] 1955), III:XI, p. 192.

> already exist a religious relation; that is to say, that they should worship at the same hearth and have the same sacrifices. When this religious community did not exist, it did not seem that there could be any legal relation. Now, neither the stranger nor the slave had any part in the religion of the city. A foreigner and a citizen might live side by side during long years, without one's thinking of the possibility of a legal relation being established between them. Law was nothing more than one phase of religion. Where there was no common religion, there was no common law.[22]

Fustel had a tendency to exaggerate the impact of family religion in later Greek culture, although its influence never died out. There were important modifications in Greek political religion, especially in Athens, from the sixth century before Christ until the conquest of Greece by Macedonia, late in the fourth century, B.C. Early in the sixth century, Solon revised the laws of Athens and began to encourage immigration.[23] Foreign craftsmen were promised citizenship if they came to dwell permanently in Athens. Alfred Zimmern saw this as an important innovation in ancient Greece, for "the states of the Greek world had not been trained by generations of competition to regard the foreigner as a unit of labour. They were in their nature select and exclusive corporations, rigidly subdivided into lesser and still selecter circles; and there was no place in them for outsiders. Solon's policy, therefore, marks the beginning of a far-reaching change of attitude. Henceforward newcomers are no longer to be despised, as in the old days, as 'cityless vagrants without hearth-fire or lands,' but welcomed as useful comrades and helpers in the work of the community. In other words, Athens was now willing to accept new blood on its merits, quite apart from questions of religion and nationality."[24] Better put, Athens found ways to enroll skilled foreign craftsmen onto the lists of the civic religion.

Nevertheless, Athens was unique, and even this uniqueness had limits. In the law of 451–450 B.C., Pericles, who is regarded as the consummate Athenian democrat by modern scholars, had a law passed that limited citizenship for outsiders to those whose parents were both Athenians, thereby closing citizenship to outsiders, including the sons of Athenian men with foreign-born mothers.[25] Glotz's

22. *Ibid.*, III:XI, pp. 192–93.

23. H. D. F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, [1951] 1962), p. 100.

24. Alfred E. Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth: Politics and Economics in Fifth-Century Athens* (Oxford: At the Clarenden Press, 1915), p. 136.

25. G. Glotz, *The Greek City and its Institutions* (New York: Barnes & Noble, [1929] 1969), p. 270.

statement is representative of the Greek city-states: "Within each city aliens had only very limited rights, even if their position were established not only by law but also by a treaty, and even if they were permanently domiciled in it as metics. These principles persisted to the end; but their severity was tempered, in international and public law alike, without, however, infringing on the sovereignty of the State."[26] Foreigners could become citizens, but the practice was always rare. Women, slaves, freedmen, and foreigners were not given the rights of citizenship. Greek political religion excluded them.

E. Dominion, Law, and Citizenship

Why the difference in access to citizenship between Israel and classical civilization? It was the difference between metaphysical and ethical religion, between ritual religion and judicial religion, between power religion and dominion religion. The difference is found in the differing conceptions of man that were proclaimed by the two religions.

1. Ethical Division

The biblical view of mankind is simultaneously universal and particular (both one and many). There is unity: all men are made in God's image, and all men (apart from grace) are ethical rebels, disinherited by their Father in heaven. There is also *disunity*: some men have been regenerated and put under *a new household covenant*, which is the household of faith, meaning God's household. In contrast to pagan religion, the meaningful differentiation is not between those born in one geographical area versus those born in another. The differentiation is between *birth in Adam's flesh versus moral rebirth by God's spirit*. It is the "old birth" versus the "new birth" that ultimately divides men.

There is, on the one hand, a *divisive aspect* in biblical religion, as in every religion. It is the division between saved and lost, between covenant-keepers and covenant-breakers. In short, this division is ethical, not geographical. The new creation is equally ethical, not the product of civic rituals of chaos, or the family religion of placating dead ancestors. On the other hand, there is also a universal aspect of biblical religion, which in turn creates a universality of biblical civic order. The link between all men, saved and lost, is the fact that all

26. *Ibid*., p. 263.

men are made in God's image, and all men have been assigned the dominion covenant (Gen. 1:26–28).[27] This, in turn, implies *the universality of God's law*, for God's law is the primary tool of dominion. Since all men are in rebellion against God, all men need the restraint that biblical law offers. Biblical law provides social and political order. Thus, the covenantal law structure of Israel is morally binding on all men. This law-order is essentially *ethical*. All men are to live righteously and exercise dominion; therefore, all men deserve the protection of biblical civil law.

Aliens in Israel were to see the beneficial effects of the law and report back to their own nations concerning the rule of righteousness in Israel—a righteousness that was not confined to citizens only. Therefore, *biblical civil law was and still is a means of evangelism*.

> Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deut. 4:5–8).[28]

2. The Medieval City: Covenantal

Max Weber, the German historian-sociologist, devoted considerable space to a study of the differences between the oriental city and the medieval city, especially the city in Northern Europe. He accepted Fustel's analysis of the clan-based ancient city. The primary difference between the two cities was the basis of citizenship: clan vs. oath. The personal covenantal oath of the individual was the basis of access to citizenship in the medieval city. Jews were excluded from citizenship, not because they were members of an outside clan, but because they could not swear allegiance to Christianity's God. "The medieval city, after all, was still a cultic association. The city church, the city saint, participation of the burgher in the Lord's Supper, the official celebrations of the church holy days—all these are obvious features of the medieval city. But the sib [brotherhood—G.N.] had been deprived of

27. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), chaps. 3, 4.

28. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, ch. 8.

all ritual significance by Christianity, for by its very nature the Christian congregation was a religious association of individual believers, not a ritual association of clans."[29]

The city became the focal point of the advent of industrialism, free trade, and the accumulation of financial resources. The Western city was instrumental in the coming of capitalism, meaning rational production and distribution that is monitored by means of rational (monetary) calculation methods. The medieval city was originally a Christian institution, a corporation based on a common oath and common law-order. It was, in short, *a covenantal association based on a shared confession of faith*. This corporate faith Was not clan-based but oath-based.

F. The Foundation of Social Order

The foundation of all social order is God. It is not the state. It is not the will of the majority. It is not the king. It is not any human institution. Biblical law provides us with the only reliable long-term program for the establishment of sustainable social order.

God created the universe, created man, and made man in His image. He assigned to man the tasks of dominion. Man therefore was endowed by God with the ability to interpret and classify the creation. Adam named the animals of the garden (Gen. 2:20). After man's rebellion, God gave men verbal instructions, and in our day, we possess written instructions in His word. Man, in short, has access to an *integrating principle* that links God, man, human institutions, and the creation within one ethical order. Understand: this order is *ethical*; it is *not ontological*. We are not unified with God's being, nor is God an aspect of the creation. But we can achieve *ethical union with God through Jesus Christ*, who is both God and a perfect man, two natures in union but without mixture in one Person. The link between God and man, between time and eternity, is Jesus Christ, and only Jesus Christ.

1. Biblical Law, Biblical Order

We can say with confidence that *the enforcement of biblical law pro-*

29. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), p. 1247. This is the English-language version of Weber's never completed and posthumously published *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 4th edition (1956). He died in 1920. This section on the city also appears in Weber, *The City*, translated and edited by Don Martindale and Gertrude Neuwirth (New York: Free Press, 1958), pp. 102–3.

vides man with the social order he requires for efficient dominion. This efficiency is present precisely because it is in harmony with the moral law. In other words, formal rationalism and substantive rationalism are in harmony under the terms of biblical law. We can attain *economic efficiency* at the same time that we attain *valid ethical ends*. We find in God's law the link between *the letter of the law* (formal rationalism) and *the spirit of the law* (substantive rationalism). We know that the common good of mankind is promoted by biblical law, not because we claim the ability to make interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility,[30] and not because we believe that the "general will" of man is expressed by majority vote,[31] but because we have faith in the reliability of God's law to integrate each man with other men and with man's environment. The law is *designed* to fit the creation, including man's institutions. The law did not evolve, nor did man evolve. We can have confidence in biblical law, not because it has been useful *up until now* in promoting the dominion of evolving man, but because it is established by God as the tool of dominion and the foundation of social peace.

This perspective relieves us of the philosophical contradictions of the humanistic concept of natural rights or human rights. *It shifts sovereignty back to God and away from man, whether individual man or collective mankind*. Natural rights theory, like its philosophical corollary, natural law theory, cannot give us specifics that are supposedly agreed upon by all rational investigators.[32]

2. God's Judgment of Collectives

What the humanist always neglects to consider is the response of God to continuing public moral evil that is not suppressed by governments, including the civil government. God brings visible judgment on evil societies (Deut. 28:15–68). The refusal to recognize this fact was (and is) a major weakness in all versions of eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century classical liberalism. The liberals look only at what men do *to* other men, ignoring what evil men do *in association with* other evil men. F. A. Hayek wrote concerning "victimless crimes": "Since for a case to come before a judge a dispute must have arisen, and since judges are not normally concerned with relations of

30. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 5.

31. Robert A. Nisbet, *Tradition and Revolt: Historical and Sociological Essays* (New York: Random House, 1968), ch. 1: "Rousseau and the Political Community."

32. Section J, below.

command and obedience, only such actions of individuals as affect other persons, or, as they are traditionally described, actions towards other persons . . . will give rise to the formulation of legal rules. . . . At the moment we want merely to point out that actions which are clearly not of this kind, such as what a person does alone within his four walls, or even the voluntary collaboration of several persons, in a manner which clearly cannot affect or harm others, can never become the subject of rules of conduct that will concern a judge."[33] Examples of "victimless crimes" are such "capitalist acts between consenting adults" as the sale and use of hard drugs, prostitution, homosexuality, and so forth.

Such acts are assumed by classical liberals and modern libertarians to be harmless to other people; they are matters "which clearly cannot affect or harm others." Hayek was honest enough to put in this qualifying sentence: "At least where it is not believed that the whole group may be punished by a supernatural power for the sins of individuals, there can arise no such rules from the limitation of conduct towards others, and therefore from the settlement of disputes."[34] The heart of the matter is here: there is a supernatural God who promises the destruction of societies that permit immoral, though voluntary, acts between consenting adults. If these acts are public, or if they are contracted in a public manner (soliciting, in other words), then they should be punishable by civil law.

The Bible says that strangers are under the law in a biblical commonwealth. The fact that they are strangers in no way exempts them from the requirements of the law. They are a part of the social order, so they must abide by the legal foundation of that order, biblical law. Christians have unfortunately adopted variations of Greek and Roman concepts of natural law and natural rights in order to convince the humanists, pagans, and other "strangers within the gates" of the advantages and moral necessity of accepting biblical laws.[35] They long ago adopted the language of "right reason" and "human rights" to defend the common law, that was heavily influenced by biblical law. In adopting incompatible judicial doctrines, Christians relinquished their claim to the only law-order that is universally valid and universally binding: biblical law.

33. F. A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, 3 vols., *Rules and Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), vol. 1, p. 101.

34. *Idem.*

35. Gary North, "The Intellectual Schizophrenia of the New Christian Right," *Christianity and Civilization*, No. 1 (1982).

God's law-order cannot be successfully defended intellectually in terms of natural law, because no system can be defended successfully in terms of natural law. The strangers within the gates have the *work of the law* written on their hearts, but they actively and willfully suppress this testimony.[36] They need the protection of biblical law, which has been revealed to us in God's word. God's people also need the protection of biblical law to protect them from the evil deeds of others. Every man needs biblical law; and every man had better acknowledge his need for a substitutionary sacrifice because of his own transgression of at least some of the requirements of biblical law.

G. Self-Government Under Biblical Law

When biblical law is enforced without respect to persons, society is given the legal structure that favors economic development and external blessings. Men are told of their moral and legal responsibilities before God. *Self-government under God's law is the primary form of government in every sphere of life*: civil government, family government, church government, economic government. There is to be a means of settling disputes: an appeals court that enforces biblical law without respect of persons. There is an *appeals court* in the church (Matt. 18:15–20; I Cor. 6:1–10[37]) and the civil government (Ex. 18:13–26). *No earthly government can possibly afford to police every aspect of human action*. No human court possesses sufficient economic resources to do so. Any court that would attempt this seeks to impose a top-down bureaucracy that is antithetical to personal initiative, personal responsibility, and economic development. Such a concept of government is the pyramid view, where the state is god, an omniscient directing agent staffed by automatons who simply carry out orders to the letter. The *pyramid society* is self-defeating; it is parasitic, uncreative, and stifling. It destroys self-government.

The biblical form of government is *a system of multiple sovereignties* ("authorities" we read in Romans 13:1), with *multiple hierarchies* (the appeals court structures), and with none universally sovereign over all other human institutions. This is a system of decentralized government, competing institutional sovereignties, and limited civil government. It is a system of government that rejects absolute human sovereignty. It recognizes the implicit total depravity of man—

36. Section J, below.

37. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 6.

the definitive depravity of man—apart from God's common or special grace—and therefore the explicit total depravity of any absolutely sovereign human institution, assuming that any institution could ever be free of God's restraints, which is not possible.

The basic and indispensable form of social discipline is the preaching of the whole counsel of God. The church must do this, the civil government must proclaim biblical civil law, and the fathers in all the families should proclaim it. *Self-government under biblical law is the indispensable means of attaining a sustainable social order*. This does not deny the need for appeals courts, but it places such courts in their proper perspective. The individual has the greatest responsibility for conforming to God's law, since the individual must give an account of his actions, thoughts, and words on the day of judgment (Matt. 12:36; Rom. 14:12). God polices everything and judges everything. He provides perfect justice and perfect punishment. There is no escape. Since the punishment is individual (Luke 12:47–48),[38] and the rewards are individual (I Cor. 3:11–15),[39] *the primary agent of earthly law enforcement is the individual*. No one else has comparable knowledge of his own actions. No other earthly authority has comparable incentives to conform a man's actions to the standards presented in God's law. The *incentive system* described by God in His word makes it plain that *the most important agency of government is the individual*.

For the individual to exercise self-government, as required by biblical law, he must be aware of the terms of the law. He must understand what his responsibilities are before God. This is why every institution ought to proclaim biblical law as it applies to that particular institution. Men should be openly confronted with biblical law, from morning to night to morning, in every sphere of life, for each man is responsible to God, and in some cases to his fellow men, from morning to night to morning, in every sphere of life. *There is no neutral zone that is free from the requirements of God's law, no area of lawlessness*. There can be conformity to the law of God or rebellion against it, but there can never be sheer lawlessness. The Bible speaks of "lawless" men, but it really means rebels against biblical law.

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38. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke,* 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 48.

39. North, *Judgment and Dominion*, ch. 3.

H. Multiple Hierarchies

The Protestants' most important contribution to the social theory of the West was their refinement of the Christian and medieval view of multiple sovereignties and therefore multiple hierarchies.[40] No man is an island. No man is solely responsible to any single institution, either. *There is no divine right of kings, who owe allegiance only to God. There is no divine right of citizens, who owe allegiance only to God*. There is no divine right of the free market. There is no divine right of any earthly institution. Each is under God; none is completely independent of all the others. This legal pluralism is one of the sources of Western liberty. But note: Western legal pluralism was not a self-conscious pluralism of law-orders ("polylegalism," which is implicitly polytheistic), but *a pluralism of human institutional sovereignties under a single law-order, God's law*. The absolute sovereignty of any human institution is denied by such a doctrine. Church canon law broke decisively with any doctrine of the unitary state. As Rushdoony noted:

> To understand the implications of canon law, it is necessary to realize that ancient society was unitary, and it had a single, visible, human sovereignty. It was totalitarian in practice and in faith. A visible "divine" authority governed the whole of life and admitted the existence of no independent order. For the ancient state, the uncontrolled was the enemy, and the controlled was the subject. Neither man nor any of his activities and institutions possessed any free, uncontrolled, or independent domain wherein the state had no jurisdiction. The sovereignty of the state meant that man was the creature of the state and entirely its subject.
>
> But Biblical faith asserted instead the sovereignty of God and the ultimacy of His decree and law, so that man, the state, and every institution were under God and His law. Instead of the sovereign state providing the overall shelter for all things, the sovereign God is that over-lord, and all of man's institutions are directly under God and His word. Instead of a mediatorial state, Christ is man's mediator. The Bible provides a legal mandate for the institutions, and the state is made the ministry of justice, and the church the ministry of the word and the sacraments. The family is under

40. On the multiplicity of legal jurisdictions in medieval legal theory after 1150, see Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), Pt. II. Berman wrote: "Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of the Western legal tradition is the coexistence and competition within the same community of diverse jurisdictions and diverse legal systems. It is this plurality of jurisdictions and legal systems that makes the supremacy of law both necessary and possible. Legal pluralism originated in the differentiation of the ecclesiastical polity from secular polities. The church declared its freedom from secular control, its exclusive jurisdiction in some matters, and its concurrent jurisdiction in other matters" (p. 10).

> God's law, as is agriculture, commerce, science, education, and all things else. Neither the church, nor the state, nor any other institution has a legitimate overall power of control. But the state in antiquity, and again today, has played the overall role of God, the sovereign over every realm and with basic and ultimate power over every realm. The state can permit or grant to its children or creatures certain privileges, but it cannot tolerate their denial of its sovereign authority. For the church therefore to issue canons placing Christians under the canons of Christ, under the laws of God, was a denial of the sovereignty of the state and of its canons. It was a shattering of the concept of the totalitarian unitary state.[41]

Harold Berman's brilliant and comprehensive history of medieval law concluded much the same concerning the role of canon law, although he did not discuss the theological foundations and implications in the same detail as Rushdoony did. He saw clearly the importance of legal pluralism in the development of Western liberty. "The pluralism of Western law, which has both reflected and reinforced the pluralism of Western political and economic life, has been, or once was, a source of development, or growth—legal growth as well as political and economic growth. It also has been, or once was, a source of freedom. A serf might run to the town court for protection against his master. A vassal might run to the king's court for protection against his lord. A cleric might run to the ecclesiastical court for protection against the king."[42]

Let us consider an example of the legal operation of the principle of multiple sovereignties. A person is found to be an adulterer. This obviously has implications for *family government*. The authority structure of the family has been broken by the guilty individual. There are lawful ways of handling this problem, at the discretion of the injured party (Matt. 1:19). At the same time, adultery is a matter of *church government*. The church can bring discipline to the guilty party, by excommunication if necessary. The *civil government* is also involved. A civil covenant has been broken. The civil government, upon complaint of the injured partner, or on the complaint of citizens who discovered the crime, must step in and bring justice (Lev. 20:10). The penalty for adultery is death. There are legal questions that must be dealt with, questions of evidence. Any decision by any of the governmental units will also have economic implications: the dowry, the custody of the children (if the state fails to execute the guilty party),

41. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order: Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church* (Vallecito, California: Ross House [1969] 1998), p. 110.

42. Berman, *Law and Revolution*, p. 10.

and so forth. Each of these sovereign agencies has limited but legitimate sovereignty. None is absolutely sovereign.

I. Moral Norms and Market Order

What I am describing is *a decentralized social order*. Even in the largest city, each man is to be under the rule of some local agencies of governments (plural). This brings to the forefront each man's personal responsibility before God. The law of God is able to provide the norms of righteousness in every sphere of life, since it provides the proper view of man, the responsible creature. We are not describing an autonomous social order, one in which there are no norms other than personal self-interest. Even the free market, which does function well in terms of personal self-interest among market participants, requires a moral foundation. Hayek admitted this, but no economist has defended more eloquently the *necessity of moral norms*—norms beyond mere market profitability—than Wilhelm Röpke. This is why he is such an important economist. The market system is based neither on violence nor on charity, Röpke argued, but it is never morally neutral. Without the bedrock of morality—essentially Christian morality—the free market cannot be sustained. Most remarkably, this economist even understood that the market is based on a *creed*.

> It is certainly true that the competitive market system—the "business economy"—keeps itself at an equal distance from both the ethically negative system of violence or ruse and the ethically positive one of altruism and charity. It reduces both to the common level of a mild standard of commercial good behaviour, but it would be a great mistake to think that that would make the market system an ethically neutral sphere. On the contrary, it is a highly sensitive artefact of occidental civilization, with all the latter's ingredients of Christian and pre-Christian morality and its secularized forms; and it should not be forgotten that the "economic man" of the classics was really an English gentleman of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, whose normal code was fixed by the church and by tradition. In fact, the market economy is an economic system which cannot exist without a minimum of mutual trust, confidence in the stability of the legal-institutional framework of the economic process (including money), contractual loyalty, honesty, fair play, professional honour, and that pride which considers it beneath one to cheat, bribe, or misuse the authority of the state for one's own egoistic purposes. Above all, there must be a "creed" in the most general sense of the term, a belief in a definite scale of ultimate values giving sense and purpose to the ordinary doings of all

> participating in the economic process, and, finally, at least a provisional understanding of the meaning and working of this economic process.[43]

The free market economy needs a creed—what Rushdoony called a foundation of social order—in order to be maintained by any society. If this creed is not based on an ethical code that is in conformity to the one presented by the Bible, the free market social order cannot survive. God removes the prosperity of that culture by removing *the moral foundation of the market*, namely, men's faith in the legitimacy of the market process—a process that is sanctioned by orthodox Christian doctrine. Röpke warned: "Thus the market economy is living on certain psycho-moral reserves, which are taken for granted when everything is going well, and only reveal their supreme importance when they are giving out."[44] That these "capital reserves" of morality are running out and not being replenished is increasingly obvious, and it was obvious to Röpke when he wrote this book in the early 1940s.

Röpke made another important point concerning the moral order undergirding the market. There is no doubt that the division of labor is basic to the market order, a point driven home graphically by Adam Smith in his deservedly famous story of the pin-makers with which he begins *Wealth of Nations* (1776). But the division of labor is a fragile and therefore potentially dangerous feature of modern society. Each of us is dependent on one another's productivity.

> We saw that an intensive economic intercourse, which involves a wide scale of division of labour and a high degree of mutual dependence of individuals, is possible only under a number of conditions, which all fall under the head of "socio-political" integration. It is this latter which, in the last resort, sets the limits to the extent and degree of economic integration. There must be a framework of institutions and of a strong legal order, and behind them, there must be a generally observed and undisputed code of moral norms and principles of behaviour. In this way, it is possible to have a society in which all its members may feel sheltered in an atmosphere of mutual confidence, security, and continuity. Only in this way is it possible to reduce and make bearable the enormous risks involved in a high degree of dependence, which is inevitably connected with the division of labour. Every page of economic history proclaims the truth of this statement, which is, indeed, the ultimate principle explaining the rise and decay, the expansion and contraction of economic organization.[45]

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43. Wilhelm Röpke, *International Economic Disintegration* (London: Hodge, [1942] 1950), pp. 68–69.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

If this economic division of labor collapses, which is possible in a program of price and wage controls—which Röpke called repressed inflation[46]—the very survival of modern, industrialized populations is threatened.

Röpke saw what was coming: *statism*. Political centralization destroys the market. It destroys the whole concept of responsible personal self-government.

> The wider the span of proletarianisation, the wilder become the cravings of the uprooted to be guaranteed social services and economic security by the state, the more do the few remaining in possession of a sense of responsibility despair, all the more stringently is the greater part of the national income claimed for and directed by the state; the more oppressive becomes the burden of taxation, a burden heavy enough already and one made all the worse through war, revolution, and public spending, and which will of course have to be extracted predominantly from the pockets of the middle classes.... There is no reason to foresee that this process is likely to stop, since this apparatus of insurance and social services is nothing other than a thirst-creating substitute for the anchor of property and can never lead to the real satisfaction of the needs of the unhappy victims of proletarianisation. The total burden will become ever more oppressive, the burden of taxation ever harder and more embittering, the apparatus ever more unwieldy, and the social bureaucracy ever more numerous. Any bits coming to the individual out of the national hotch-pot will become ever more subject to formulae, tickets, reportings on and off, income-tax forms, etc.; the hair-spring of a sense of responsibility cum self-respect which keeps the whole thing going will become ever weaker, the whole economic process will function more and more clumsily, its defects will increase and become ever more tiresome; all in all enough to increase the individual's sense of insecurity and also to put up his demands. The only possible end to all this would seem to be complete catastrophe for nation and society, nor need we go back for examples to the latter period of the Roman Empire.[47]

He wrote this in the late 1940s, before the process of bureaucratization had fully accelerated. It was the same process that Max Weber had seen at the beginning of the twentieth century, except that Weber did not even have the hope of economic collapse as a possible way to escape what he called the bureaucratic cage.[48]

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46. Röpke, *Economics of the Free Society* (Chicago: Regnery, 1963), p. 104.

47. Röpke, *Civitas Humana: A Humane Order of Society* (London: Hodge, 1948), pp. 141–42.

48. Gary North, "Max Weber: Rationalism, Irrationalism, and the Bureaucratic Cage," in Gary North (ed.), *Foundations of Christian Scholarship: Essays in the Van Til Perspective* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, 1976), ch. 8.

J. Natural Law Theory vs. Biblical Law

In the history of Christian social theory, there has been continuing confusion concerning the relationship between biblical law and Greek and Roman natural law theory. Before drawing this chapter to a close, we need to review what the Bible says about law. Christian social theory has been compromised again and again in the past because of errors in thinking about Bible-revealed law and the various aspects of this revelation.

The biblical doctrine of the universality of God's law is not the same as the concept of natural law, a theory developed especially by Greek and Roman philosophers, which passed into Western history through the writings of medieval church scholars.[49] Natural law is based on the idea of man's universal reason. The minds of men supposedly have in common the powers of reasoning, thereby implying the existence of a universal human mind, and the logic of this universal mind could, if respected, bring all men everywhere to acknowledge identical fundamental principles of law.

Aristotle's analytic distinction between particular laws and general laws is an excellent example of natural law philosophy. It rests on a concept of *human unity*, implying shared viewpoints. "Now there are two kinds of laws, particular and general. By particular laws I mean those established by each people in reference to themselves, which again are divided into written and unwritten; by general laws I mean those based upon nature. In fact, there is a general idea of just and unjust in accordance with nature, as all men in manner divine, even if there is neither communication nor agreement between them."[50] Such a conception of natural law rests on the assumption of a universal human logic, the universal applicability in history of that logic, and the universal recognition of this logic and its universal applicability by all reasonable men. It assumes, in short, the neutrality of human thought.

1. The Myth of Neutrality

The Bible explicitly denies any such neutrality. Men are divided into saved and lost, keepers of God's covenant and breakers of God's covenant. There is no agreement between the two positions. There is

49. Archie P. Jones, "Natural Law and Christian Resistance to Tyranny," *Christianity and Civilization*, 2 (1983).

50. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I, 1373b; from *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. John Henry Freese (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926).

such a thing as the *work* of the law of God which is written in every human heart—not the law itself, which is a special gift of God to His people (Heb. 8:8–11), but the work of the law (Rom. 2:14–15).[51] Nevertheless, this law serves only to condemn men, for they will not abide by its provisions: "For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (Rom. 2:11–12). Human reason, unaided by God's revelation—untwisted by God's grace—cannot devise a universal law code based on any presumed universal human logic. What mankind's universal reason can do is to rebel against God and His law. Ethical rebels are not logically faithful to God.

Biblical law had to be read to everyone in Israel at least once every seven years (Deut. 31:10–13).[52] God presumed that men would not understand His law unless they heard it (Deut. 31:13). Every resident of the land had to listen to this law. If the whole of biblical law had been ingrained into the consciences of all men from the beginning of time, or if the terms of the law, including the law's explicit penalties, were always available to all men through the exercise of man's universal reason, then the law would not have required the priests to read the Mosaic law before the congregation of Israel every seventh year.

In our day, why should Christians who have biblical law written in their heart (Heb. 8:9–11) still have to listen to the public teaching of this law? Because the implantation of biblical law at the time of a person's regeneration is *definitive, not progressive*, and certainly *not final*. Biblical law is implanted in the believer, but the old sin nature still wars against the law (Rom. 7). Thus, Christians also as sinners tend to hold back the truths of the law in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).[53] Nevertheless, the definitive implanting of biblical law in the hearts of the regenerate—a definitive event leading progressively through study and application to our final understanding of the law—is different from the work of the law which is in the heart of the unbeliever. What the unbeliever has in his heart is *definitive rebellion*, in Adam. As he progressively works out the implications of his faith, he loses sight of the work of the law. *He works out progressively what is definitively inherited by him, namely, ethical rebellion*.

51. North, *Cooperation and Dominion*, ch. 2.

52. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 75.

53. North, *Cooperation and Dominion*, ch. 1.

The popularity of natural law concepts has been very great throughout the history of the church. By importing Greek and Roman concepts of natural law into church law, medieval theologians unknowingly mixed together two rival systems of thought. *The Greek and Roman concept of natural law rested on the presupposition of man's autonomy. It rested on the presupposition of neutrality in human thought*. The Bible recognizes the common heritage of the image of God in man, but it sees this image as twisted and perverse in rebellious man. Thus, the universality of men's perception of certain aspects of biblical law is a *universality of condemnation*. The Bible requires that we build the kingdom of God in terms of a different universality, the *universality of the binding nature of biblical law*. The whole of God's law is binding on individual men and corporate associations, not simply this or that dimly perceived, and improperly interpreted, aspect of God's law.

2. The Work of the Law

Romans 2:14–15 reads: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law of God, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." John Murray's extensive commentary on these verses is important in understanding what they do not mean, as well as what they do mean. Murray wrote:

> "By nature" is contrasted with what is derived from external sources and refers to that which is engraven on our natural constitution. What is done "by nature" is done by native instinct or propension, by spontaneous impulse as distinguished from what is induced by forces extraneous to ourselves. The things done by nature are said to be "the things of the law." It is to be observed that the apostle does not say that they do or fulfil the law and he must have intentionally refrained from such an expression. "The things of the law" must mean certain things which the law prescribes and refer to those things practiced by pagans which are stipulated in the law, such as the pursuit of lawful vocations, the procreation of offspring, filial and natural affection, the care of the poor and sick, and numerous other natural virtues which are required by the law. In doing these things "by nature" they "are the law unto themselves." This expression should not be understood in the sense of popular current use when we say that a man is a law to himself. It means almost the opposite, that they themselves, by reason of what is implanted in their nature, confront themselves with the law of God. They themselves reveal the law of God to themselves—

> their persons is the medium of revelation.... Hence with respect to those without specifically revealed law three things are true: (1) the law of God confronts them and registers itself in their consciousness by reason of what they natively and constitutionally are; (2) they do things which this law prescribes; (3) this doing is not by extraneous constraint but by natural impulse.[54]

It is not a different law that confronts them in their heart, Murray said; it is not a rival law to the law delivered to God's people through Moses. At the same time, "Paul does not say that the law is written upon their hearts. He refrains from this form of statement apparently for the same reason as in verse 14 he had said that the Gentiles 'do the things of the law' and not that they did or fulfilled the law. Such expressions as 'fulfilling the law' and 'the law written upon the heart' are reserved for a state of heart and mind and will far beyond that predicated of unbelieving Gentiles."[55] So, the *work* of the law, or the *things* of the law, written in their hearts, is comprehensive enough to *condemn* them, but it is not the transforming reworking of the heart that the Bible refers to as regeneration.

There is no dominion apart from the categories of biblical law. All men are called to subdue the earth, and even rebellious men are sufficiently restrained by their own nature, in time and on earth, so that they might exercise dominion. God promised to drive the Canaanites out of the land slowly, so that the land might not revert to wilderness (Ex. 23:28–29). Better unregenerate man in control of Canaan than the wild beasts, God said. The unregenerate are given a restraining knowledge of the law, so that they might exercise dominion. When we find a culture that is in almost total rebellion against the work of the law, we find almost total impotence. Men cannot build societies by means of "natural" law.

Perhaps the clearest statement of the progressive separation of the righteous from the unrighteous over time was made by a character in C. S. Lewis' magnificent novel, *That Hideous Strength*. The character, Prof. Dimble, describes the effects of the development over time of both the Christian and non-Christian views. As time goes on, they become more and more self-consistent, and therefore less and less compatible. "If you dip into any college, or school, or parish, or family—anything you like—at a given point in its history, you always find

54. John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964), I, pp. 73–74. A later edition in one volume replaced the two-volume edition.

55. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 74–75.

that there was a time before that point when there was more elbow room, and contrasts weren't quite as sharp; and that there's going to be a time after that point when there is even less room for indecision, and choices are even more momentous. Good is always getting better, and bad is always getting worse: the possibilities of even apparent neutrality are always diminishing. The whole thing is sorting itself out all the time, coming to a point, getting sharper and harder."[56] The further in time we get from the garden of Eden, or from Noah's Flood, or from the crucifixion, the less that rebellious men will acknowledge or adhere to the testimony of the work of the law written on their hearts. To appeal to natural law is to lean on a weak reed.

3. The Collapse of Natural Law Theory

In the latter decades of the twentieth century, the West experienced the long-term effects of a revolution that began in the Enlightenment and became institutionally inescapable with the outbreak of World War I. A crisis of confidence has appeared in the West that has undermined the West's confidence in its own legal institutions. Harold Berman's account of this erosion is masterful.

> That the Western legal tradition, like Western civilization as a whole, is undergoing in the twentieth century a crisis greater than it has ever known before is not something that can be proved scientifically. It is something that is known, ultimately, by intuition. I can only testify, so to speak, that I sense that we are in the midst of an unprecedented crisis of legal values and of legal thought, in which our entire legal tradition is being challenged—not only the so-called liberal concepts of the past few hundred years, but the very structure of Western legality, which dates from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
>
> The crisis is being generated both from within Western experience and from without. From within, social and economic and political transformations of unprecedented magnitude have put a tremendous strain upon traditional legal institutions, legal values, and legal concepts in virtually all countries of the West. Yet in the past there have been periods of revolutionary upheaval which have also threatened to destroy basic elements of the Western legal tradition, and that tradition has nevertheless survived. What is new today is the challenge to the legal tradition as a whole, and not merely to particular elements or aspects of it; and this is manifested above all in the confrontation with non-Western civilizations and non-Western philosophies. In the past, Western man has confidently carried his law with him throughout the world. The world today, however,

56. C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (New York: Macmillan, [1946] 1965), p. 283.

> is suspicious—more, suspicious than ever before—of Western "legalism." Eastern and Southern Man offer other alternatives. The West itself has come to doubt the universal validity of its traditional vision of law, especially its validity for non-Western cultures. Law that used to seem "natural" seems only "Western." And many are saying that it is obsolete even for the West.[57]

The acids of the West's own humanism and relativism have eroded the foundations of Western legality, which has been one of the chief pillars of Western civilization. If all cultures are equally valid, then their legal traditions are also equally valid as aspects of these competing cultures. Therefore, Hayek recommended that it would be morally wrong to revive a dying elderly Eskimo who has been left to perish in the snow by his peers, unless you are willing to put him in a new society. Otherwise, the Eskimos' legal order should be left alone.[58] Is it any wonder, then, that Hayek's eloquent plea for a nineteenth-century humanist version of the rule of law failed to gain the commitment of scholars and social philosophers in the twentieth? His own twentieth-century relativism (implicit in nineteenth-century relativism) eroded his economic and legal prescriptions. Is it any wonder that his logical defense of the free market economy, which rests on the legal foundation of plural legal sovereignties, limited civil government, and equality before the law, has lost its appeal in this age of democratic centralism?

Men seek a sovereignty greater than themselves, a sovereignty that can guarantee meaning to their lives and success in their many ventures. If God is not the source of law, and law is not universally valid because it is revealed, biblical law, then only a hypothetical universal power state remains to give man the sovereignty he seeks. If this also fails, then nothing remains to assure mankind that his works have meaning in time and on earth. Then the escapist religion leaves mankind with its only hope: mystical self-transcendence and flight from mundane reality.[59]

The failure of the natural law doctrine was assured when men at last ceased to equate natural law with biblical law. When natural law was at last recognized as "natural" rather than revealed, autonomous rather than created, then it gained its universality only to the extent

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57. Berman, *Law and Revolution*, pp. 33–34.

58. F. A Hayek, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), II, *The Mirage of Social Justice*, p. 27.

59. This was Max Weber's recommendation in his 1919 lecture, "Politics as a Vocation."

that mankind is seen as a true universal. But with the rise of relativism as an epistemological principle, the hoped-for unity of man collapsed. Now only power remains, not natural law. Now only the rise of a new source of unity, the world state, can guarantee man's legal order the unity it requires to maintain its claim to "naturalness." Natural law thereby ceases being natural. A universal law can only be *imposed* by the power state. To summarize: natural law theory abandoned reliance on the revealed law of the God of the Bible in order to assert its autonomy and universality, only to lose both its autonomy and naturalness (self-attesting universal validity) to the new sovereignty of the power state.

4. The Primacy of Faith

Because different men and different nations are always in various stages of active rebellion against God—the *active restraining* of the truth of God that testifies to them in their own natures—we cannot hope to gain agreement about universal principles of law. It is not reason that opens the precepts of the law to rebellious men. They already have such precepts. Their consciences testify to them of the truth, but they restrain the truth, holding it back in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).[60] To believe that *reason* will reveal to men the universal principles of God's dominion covenant, which is also His treaty of unconditional surrender, is to believe that *reason is untainted by the Fall of man*. But reason has been as twisted by that ethical rebellion as surely as any other aspect of man's personality. To believe in natural law is to believe in natural reason; to believe in natural reason, or "reason rightly understood," is to believe in *the primacy of the intellect*.[61] The Bible does not teach the primacy of the intellect; it teaches *the primacy of faith*.

When men say that "the Bible is not in contradiction to scientific truth," they generally mean that the Bible is not in opposition to the discoveries of the autonomous human intellect. This statement is absolutely false, if such a conclusion is intended. The Bible is *opposed*

60. On this active suppression of the truth, see Murray, *Romans*, pp. 36–37.

61. The rationalist apologetic methodology of "old Princeton" Seminary is representative of this error. Benjamin B. Warfield wrote of "irrational faith, that is, a faith without grounds in right reason." Warfield, "Introduction to Francis R. Beattie's Apologetics" (1903); reprinted in John E. Meeter (ed.), *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*—II (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973), p. 98. He implicitly contrasted such a faith with Christianity, which apparently is a faith which is grounded in "right reason." The problem, of course, is that nobody agrees about the content or standards of "right reason."

to such universally proclaimed "scientific truths" as evolution of one species into another through natural selection, or the eternality of matter-energy, or the doctrine of uniformitarian change. What a consistent Christian must maintain is this: "The Bible is the foundation for human reason, and no conclusion of the human mind which is in opposition to revealed truth in the Bible is scientifically valid." *The truths of science, if they are to be accepted, must be in conformity to biblical revelation*. There are not two truths—"natural science" and biblical revelation—but rather one truth: *science in conformity to biblical revelation*. What is true of natural science—the man-interpreted regularities of the observed universe—must also be true of man's speculation in other areas of life.

Christians should not say that "natural law" and biblical revelation are the same because the truths of human jurisprudence are "naturally" in conformity to biblical revelation. They should say, on the contrary, that the truths of human jurisprudence, insofar as they are true, are true in spite of man's twisted, rebellious, "natural" reason. This is why the Bible required that Israel assemble once every seven years to listen to the reading of the law of God.

Conclusion

The doctrine of the rule of law is distinctly biblical in origin. A law-order that is universally binding on all men is an idea that had its origins in biblical religion. The same God who judges all men also puts all men under the terms of biblical law. The God who made Adam also made all men responsible to Him through Adam. Thus, when the Hebrews placed foreign residents under both the restraints of biblical law and the benefits of biblical law, they made a fundamental break with paganism. Natural law theory, which was later paganism's attempt to appropriate the universalism of biblical law, was adopted by the West through the influence of church canon law and other remnants of Hebrew law.

Some fundamental aspects of the rule of law are these:

1. A common set of moral requirements
2. Public proclamation of the law
3. Universal application of these standards
4. Equality before the law (no respecting of persons)

In short, *the law is to be predictable and universal*. Civil law as it applies to citizens in their daily activities is to be sufficiently simple so

that the vast majority of men can understand its general principles and its specific applications (case laws). This is not to deny that specialized applications of biblical law principles are never going to be complex. But those who work in specialized areas of society are to be aware of these specialized applications. It may be that a "jury of one's peers," or at least a portion of the jury's membership, should be composed of people selected randomly from a group of specialists in the particular sphere or calling of the litigants. *The crucial issue is legal predictability, not the technicalities of the law*. In short, men are to have reasonable expectations concerning the decisions of judges and juries in specific legal conflicts. Most important, *men must have confidence in the integrity of the law itself*, and not just the institutional agencies of law enforcement, for without confidence in the law itself, men will not believe that their day-by-day adherence to the law is related directly to external benefits, both individual and social. They will lose the major incentive of *self-government under law*.

Without the rule of law, capitalism could never have developed. It developed in the West precisely because Christianity was the religion of the West. As Christianity's influence has waned, especially in the last hundred years, capitalism has been challenged by increasingly hostile welfare state critics. *Formal legal predictability*, the bedrock of a free market social order, has been abandoned by the intellectuals and the voters. The predictable "rules of the game" that govern capitalism are no longer respected by expansionist civil governments that are propelled by the politics of envy.

J. R. Lucas commented on the relationship between atheism and state-worship: "In an age in which many people find it hard to believe in God, there is a strong tendency to worship the state—or society—as a God-substitute and to refer all our demands and duties to it alone, and then the demand for distributive justice will manifest totalitarian tendencies. The mistake lies in thinking too much of the state, not in seeking justice in our dealings with our fellow man."[62] As faith in God's law has declined along the greased skids of human autonomy—from Roman law to canon law, to scholastic natural law, to Deism's natural law, and then to the positive law of the state—the state has become increasingly dominant.

Pluralism of the law is the great threat to Western society. What was

62. J. R. Lucas, "Liberty, Morality, and Justice," in Robert L. Cunningham (ed.), *Liberty and the Rule on Law* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1979), p. 148.

plural in the Western legal tradition was not the law-order itself, but rather the *legal order*—the institutions and spheres of application of a universal law-order. It was not the law-order that was plural, but the enforcement arrangements in the various social and institutional spheres. What is today destroying the Western legal tradition is the pluralism of religious humanism—*a pluralism of law-orders*. This points to a pluralism of gods, or rather the absence of anyone God as Creator and Guarantor of a single law-order. *Men now seek to create a new unified law-order that will testify to a new god*. This new god is the same old god of the satanic temptation: the *power state*, the highest and most powerful representative of the sovereign god of humanism, collective mankind.

The rise of arbitrary government, with its punitive legislation against profits, now threatens the West with a return to pagan barbarism. This was the lesson of the Hebrews in Egypt. It also became the lesson of twentieth-century administrative law, administered by bureaucracies. We must take seriously Berman's warning.

> The crisis of the Western legal tradition is not merely a crisis in legal philosophy but also a crisis in law itself. Legal philosophers have always debated, and presumably always will debate, whether law is founded in reason and morality or whether it is only the will of the political ruler. It is not necessary to resolve that debate in order to conclude that as a matter of historical fact the legal systems of all the nations that are heirs to the Western legal tradition have been rooted in certain beliefs or postulates: that is, the legal systems themselves have presupposed the validity of those beliefs. Today those beliefs or postulates—such as the structural integrity of the law, its ongoingness, its religious roots, its transcendent qualities—are rapidly disappearing, not only from the minds of philosophers, not only from the minds of lawmakers, judges, lawyers, law teachers, and other members of the legal profession, but from the consciousness of the vast majority of citizens, the people as a whole; and more than that, they are disappearing from the law itself. The law is becoming more fragmented, more subjective, geared more to expediency and less to morality, concerned more with immediate consequences and less with consistency and continuity. Thus the historical soil of the Western legal tradition is being washed away in the twentieth century, and the tradition itself is threatened with collapse.
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> The breakdown of the Western legal tradition springs only in part from the socialist revolutions that were inaugurated in Russia in October 1917 and that have gradually spread throughout the West (and throughout other parts of the world as well), albeit often in relatively mild forms. It springs only in part from massive state intervention in the economy of the

> nation (the welfare state), and only in part from the massive bureaucratization of social and economic life through huge centralized corporate entities (the corporate state). It springs much more from the crisis of Western civilization itself, commencing in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I. This was more than an economic and technological revolution, more even than a political revolution. If it had not been, Western society would be able to adapt its legal institutions to meet the new demands placed upon them, as it has done in revolutionary situations in the past. Western society would be able to accommodate socialism—of whatever variety—within its legal tradition. But the disintegration of the very foundations of that tradition cannot be accommodated; and the greatest challenge to those foundations is the massive loss of confidence in the West itself, as a civilization, a community, and in the legal tradition which for nine centuries has helped to sustain it.[63]

The age-old debate among legal scholars that he mentions—whether reason and morality are the source of law, or the ruler—is answered by the Bible. God is the Ruler and therefore the source of both reason and morality. Both morality and the law-order are harmonious and self-reinforcing, because they are both created by God and under God. Because men as philosophers, moralists, and political rulers are in the image of God, their thoughts and acts reflect the God who made them. They may deviate from His thoughts and laws, for they are in various degrees ethical rebels, but man's law-order can never wholly escape God's ultimate standards. God is absolutely sovereign; reason, morality, and kings are only derivatively sovereign

Christians should also respond to the crisis of Western law with the answers that Berman is unwilling to call for: the restoration of Christianity as the foundation of Western religion, the restoration of this religion as the foundation of morality and reason, and the establishment of biblical law rather than the restoration of natural law theory as the foundation of social order. Nothing else will revive the West. A true religious revival—*a comprehensive revival* that restructures every human institution in terms of biblical law—alone can establish the West's foundations of long-term social and legal order. A true revival alone can re-establish the long-term institutional foundations of the free market economy.

63. Berman, *Law and Revolution*, pp. 39–40.

15

THE FIRSTBORN OFFERING

The LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

EXODUS 13:1–2

The theocentric principle here is God's absolute ownership of all things (Ps. 24:1).[1]

A. The Symbolism

God set apart ritually the firstborn males of Israel. It was a symbol to the people of Israel of the sovereignty of God. Each family had to regard the precious firstborn son as God's property. "For all of the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself" (Num. 8:17). God set them apart—sanctified them—as His special possession.

The symbolism of the firstborn is important in the Bible. Adam was God's created firstborn son (Luke 3:38), and Adam was created to serve God as God's assistant in charge of the earth. Adam's rebellion called forth God's grace in sending Jesus Christ, the *second Adam* (I Cor. 15:45). Jesus Christ was more than a created firstborn Son; He was the only begotten Son of God, the *second Person* of the Trinity (John 1:14, 18; Acts 13:33). This only begotten Son was set aside by God as a living, literal sacrifice to God—the *second sacrifice* that forever removed the first sacrifices (Heb. 10:9)—so that God's people might not taste the *second death* (Rev. 20:14–15).

1. Gary North, *Confidence and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Psalms* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 5.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament looked forward to Christ's final sacrifice. The owner of the pregnant beast could not profit from the potential productivity of the first male offspring. "All the firstling males that come of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep" (Deut. 15:19).[2] The animal belonged to God. To use a modern phrase, "God took His cut (percentage) off the top." He received an immediate payment; the owner had to wait until the birth of the second male to reap his profit.

"The firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me" (Ex. 22:29b–30). The firstborn male animal was separated from its mother and was eventually sacrificed in Jerusalem; the newborn son was circumcised (Lev. 12:3). In the case of all sons, circumcision was required, but the eighth day was significant. It marked the sign of God's wrath on all male flesh, the result of Adam's rebellion. It pointed to man's rebellion against God on the seventh day, God's day of rest, and testified to the need of restoration—a new week in which man might reconstruct a fallen order, under God. When man struck out on his own, as a self-professed autonomous being, inaugurating "man's week," God cut him off from the garden and from the tree of life. We are not specifically told in the Bible that Adam rebelled on the seventh day of creation, but it seems likely. That day was to have been a day of communion with God, a day that established Adam's covenantal commitment and religious perspective.[3]

There is an apparent problem with the thesis of a seventh-day rebellion. Israel's bloody sacrifice of circumcision was performed on the eighth day. Also, the separation of firstborn male animals from their mothers in preparation for their slaughter (or their redemption) took place on the eighth day. The sorrow of the mothers on the eighth day seems to parallel the sorrow of women in childbirth (Gen. 3:16). (Female mammals suffer similar travails when giving birth, though the Bible does not record a specific curse on them by God.) Problem: If the judgment on Eve came on the seventh day because of her sin on that day, why was the eighth day the day of sorrow for mothers in

2. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 38.

3. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 6.

Israel? Don't the eighth-day sacrifices point to an eighth-day rebellion—the day after the first sabbath? I deal with this problem below ("Christ, the Firstfruits").

B. The Economic Cost of Sacrifice

In the case of sacrificial animals (ox, sheep, goat), redemption was forbidden (Num. 18:17), so the loss of the firstborn male animal was irrevocable. It was a total loss for both its mother and the human owner. It symbolized the total extent of God's wrath against sin. The animal was forever lost; so was the time it had taken to breed the mother and care for her during her pregnancy. By sacrificing the firstborn male animals, the Israelites were admitting that they and all that they possessed were under the threat of judgment, and that only by conforming to the terms of God's covenant could they escape God's total cutting off of man and his works. Apart from God's grace, man's covenantal rebellion brings permanent destruction. Egypt learned this on the night of the Passover meal.

Even an animal that was not allowed on God's altar had to die or obtain a substitute. "And every firstling, of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem" (Ex. 13:13; cf. Num. 18:15–17). Just because a profitable donkey could not be sacrificed on the altar, the Israelites were not entitled to make use of it free of charge, as if it were not the Lord's. Either it died away from the altar or a lamb died before the altar. If the lamb was perceived by its owner to be of greater value, then he was allowed to execute the donkey. He could not reap the income available from a firstborn male without sacrificing something of comparable value. He did have some discretion, however. If donkeys were in high demand, and sheep were in relatively low demand, or vice versa, he had his choice. *The Bible does not teach a doctrine of fixed or intrinsic market value*. It does not teach that a donkey's market price is always equal to a lamb's during the first week of its life. The possibility of wide variations in market prices between the two firstborn animals was always present. The owner made his choice. The animals were symbolically equivalent, but not equal in market value.

It should be obvious, however, that *permanent large price discrepancies would have been unlikely*. If one or the other firstborn animal was highly valued, men would have begun to slay the other, which would have reduced the supply of the less valuable species. An increased

supply of lambs in relation to donkeys, because men were choosing to break the necks of donkeys, would have tended to increase the price of donkeys relative to lambs. Owners would then have had an economic incentive to spare some donkeys and slay more lambs. *Each species had a built-in economic protection from excessive losses*.

The priests received the burnt offerings. Since they lived in Jerusalem, the animals set aside (removed from their dams) had to be brought to Jerusalem (Deut. 12:6). This indicates that on the eighth day the sacrificial animal was not immediately sacrificed by the father in the household, but set apart—*sanctified*, in other words—for God. When the family journeyed to Jerusalem for the Passover or other visits, it carried the animal, or its substitute, or its money payment. In the meantime, the beast could not be used for profit (Deut. 15:19). The formal or symbolic separation from the mother took place on the eighth day; to keep it alive, it would have been necessary to let it continue to nurse. This was the case in the dedication of Samuel by Hannah (I Sam. 1:11, 22–23). Perhaps the family devised some mechanical means to feed the newborn animals during the waiting period between the separation and the sacrifice or the redemption.

The firstborn male in each family had to be redeemed by means of a payment to the priests. The family had to pay five shekels (Num. 18:16). This was done one month after the birth of the child. The same payment could be made to save the life of an unclean beast (Num. 18:15). Possibly only the donkey had to be redeemed by means of a lamb; other unclean animals were purchased with money from death, although it may have been that all animals were redeemed with lambs.[4] The firstborn of cows, sheep, and goats had to die (Num. 18:17).

The language of the firstborn indicates that the firstborn son of every Hebrew family had to be dedicated to God for service. God made the following arrangement: "Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am the Lord" (Num. 3:45). Families then made payment to the Aaronical priesthood instead of dedicating their own firstborn sons (Num. 3:48, 51). At the time of the segregation of the Levitical priesthood, each family

4. James Jordan suggested that all unclean beasts were "redeemed" by lambs, while humans were redeemed with silver. He cites I Peter 1:18–19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

with a firstborn son made this initial payment (Num. 3:46–47). From that time on, the payment for firstborn sons went to Aaron's house.

Egypt had chosen not to substitute the blood offering required by God to serve as a substitute payment. The firstborn sons of Egypt died. There is no escape from this required sacrifice. God shows mercy to the sons of Adam for the sake of Christ's sacrifice as God's firstborn, the high priest, the one set apart by God to become the firstborn offering.

C. Christ, the Firstfruits

Jesus rose from the dead on the day after the Passover sabbath. It was the first day of the week (Luke 24:1). This day was also the day of the firstfruits offering, the day the lamb of the firstfruits was to be sacrificed (Lev. 23:12). Paul refers to "Christ the firstfruits" (I Cor. 15:23). I argued in the first edition of *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis* that this firstfruits offering was made on the eighth day (the day after the seventh day), and it covered the sin of Adam, who probably rebelled on the eighth day after God began His work of creation, meaning the day after the sabbath.[5] I have been persuaded by James Jordan that this explanation needs modification. Adam probably rebelled on the first full day of life, the sabbath. God covered him with the skins of animals on that day, which meant that blood was shed. What about the shedding of blood of the Hebrew male in circumcision on the eighth day (Lev. 12:3), and the separation of the firstborn male from its mother on the eighth day (Ex. 22:30)? Why was this required on the eighth day, if the symbolic ethical covering (animal skins) had been provided by God in the garden on the seventh day, assuming that Jordan is correct concerning Adam's seventh-day rebellion? Jordan argued that the eighth-day rites pointed to *the need for a new creation*, a coming *ethical transformation* that would inaugurate a new kingdom and a new dominion. Adam's sin had polluted the sabbath. It had polluted the first day of man's week, a day that is supposed to prepare us for six days of service in the kingdom. This was the day on which he was to have received his marching orders in preparation for his work week. *What mankind needed after Adam's rebellion was a new day, a cleansed day, for a new beginning.*

"Christ the firstfruits" was resurrected on the eighth day (the day following the sabbath) *to inaugurate the new week of redeemed humanity*,

5. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 6:D.

beginning with *a new day of rest*. This was the long-expected culmination of the rites of circumcision and firstborn sacrifice, the necessary substitute payment for the sin of Adam, but timed so as to point to a new creation. Christ's resurrection proved that His sacrifice on the cross was sufficient to atone for men's sins, so the Old Testament's annual sacrifices, the circumcisions, and the firstborn sacrifices are no longer necessary (Heb. 7:26–28).

The Book of Nehemiah explicitly links together the firstfruits of the ground, the trees, the dough, the wine, and the firstborn of sons and animals (Neh. 10:35–37). *Christ can be seen as both the firstfruits and firstborn offering.* He is the firstborn and only begotten Son of God. His resurrection proves that firstborn sons no longer need to die, that firstborn animals no longer need to be sacrificed, and that firstborn sons no longer need to be circumcised the eighth day. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Christ's victory on the eighth day has overcome the need for sacrifices on the eighth day.

Christ's sacrifice transfers capital back to man. No longer are men required to sacrifice the firstborn animals of their flocks. No longer must they journey to Jerusalem to present their sacrificial animals. No longer are the "mothers in Israel" saddened on the eighth day by the loss of their firstborn males (animals) or the marring of their sons' flesh. No longer are fathers required to pay five shekels upon the birth of the first son. *Family capital is thereby increased by Christ's sacrifice*. Men paid token prices to a holy God in Old Testament times, only because God honored the incomparably costly future sacrifice of His Son. Now, even those token payments have been abrogated. Redeemed men keep their lives and their capital, for God's Son lost both His life and His capital at the cross. Not even a cloak to cover His nakedness was held back by Christ (Matt. 27:35). It cost Christ every earthly possession, including His modesty. His people are the immediate beneficiaries, for they retain a greater portion of their capital than they did before the cross. Our dominion tasks are made less onerous, and our celebrations become that much more splendid, as a result of this New Testament transfer of capital back to His people. *The resurrection lightened the financial burdens of His people, forever*. The restraints imposed on the outworking of the dominion covenant in the Old Testament have been removed with the coming of the Holy Spirit and the establishment of a new covenant. A righteous culture is now possible. Like the child/slave who matures into an adult (Gal. 4),

we no longer suffer the dominical restraints of the ceremonial aspects of the law.

Conclusion

Christ's death and resurrection in principle erased our guilt and our obligation to offer blood sacrifices. It healed the rebellious hearts of God's adopted sons, allowing them to participate in redeemed man's week, which *begins with man's rest*, because Christ's sacrifice is now behind us chronologically. Thus the Lord's day has been moved to the eighth day, so that the first day of man's week is, *as it was in the garden*, a day of rest. Redeemed men announce their dependence on God by beginning their work week with rest, a statement of their complete dependence on God's grace and blessings—a ritual declaration of their having abandoned autonomous man's week, which allows no cost-free rest for man. Christians announce their reliance on the work of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, thereby renouncing their reliance on their own efforts, as sons of the first Adam. God restores their capital to them by reducing their former obligation to pay in blood on the eighth day. We rest now, and we have increased wealth to show for it. Let the fathers rejoice, and let all mothers rejoice, too. The blood no longer flows in the new covenant Israel.

16

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SLAVERY

> *Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.*
>
> EXODUS 14:12

The theocentric principle here is God's patience with repeated rebellion and loss of faith on the part of covenant-keepers.

A. The Day of Release

The day of the Lord had come to Israel, the long-awaited day of release from bondage. God had manifested His power in a series of mighty acts, culminating in the death of the firstborn of Egypt. If ever there was going to be a day of release, this was it. Remaining in bondage for "a better day to flee, a more opportune moment to escape" would have been preposterous. Pharaoh's will to resist their departure had been temporarily overcome. The Egyptians had encouraged their rapid departure. God had opened the way of escape to them, and the Egyptians had literally pushed them out of the land, paying them to depart.

All the same, neither Pharaoh nor the Israelites had escaped from their basic outlooks. Pharaoh had temporarily capitulated to the demands of Moses. The Israelites had temporarily taken heart at God's mighty acts, and they had even dared to demand restitution (spoils) from their Egyptian captors. But Pharaoh was a self-proclaimed divine monarch, theoretically sovereign over all Egypt, and the Hebrews had been his slaves. The Hebrews were convinced that their position as servants in the land was permanent. They had been slaves

in body, and their responses to Moses, time after time, were the responses of people who were also slaves in their souls.

Pharaoh soon became convinced that he had made a mistake in allowing them to leave (Ex. 14:5), and the Hebrews soon became convinced that they had made a mistake in listening to Moses and leaving. The Hebrews could not forget the earthly power of their former master; they seemed unable to acknowledge the awesome power of their new master, Jehovah. Their cry went up to Moses: better to have served as earthly slaves in Egypt than to bear the visible risks and burdens of freedom under God. Neither the Hebrews nor Pharaoh wanted to admit that God does not call His people to be perpetual slaves in body, and that they are never to become slaves of men in spirit. Neither Pharaoh nor the Hebrews could admit that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. 3:17b).

The Bible contrasts two sorts of servitude: slavery to the earthly life and its sinful perspectives, on the one hand, and slavery to God, whose "yoke is easy" and whose "burden is light" (Matt. 11:30), on the other. *Slaves unto life or slaves unto death: men cannot escape from subordination.* Hierarchy is built into the dominion covenant that defines mankind. Satan lures people to believe that they can achieve freedom from all subordination by asserting their own autonomy and sovereignty—in short, to be as God. The result is temporal ethical subordination to Satan, and eternal judgmental subordination to God. When God's hand is lowered in judgment on a civilization, ethical subordination to Satan also means destruction, in time and on earth.

God recognized the weakness of these newly freed slaves. When it came time for them to depart from Egypt, He led them east to the Red Sea. Had they gone in a northeast direction, they would have had to pass through the land of the Philistines, although geographically speaking, it would have been a shorter route into Canaan. But God recognized their weakness; they were not ready for a direct military confrontation (Ex. 13:17–18). They might have returned to Egypt had they been challenged from the front. They were being driven from the rear, at first by the Egyptians who implored them to depart, and then by the attacking army of Pharaoh.

This pressure from the rear was accompanied by God's pillar of fire and cloud in front of them (Ex. 13:21–22). They looked forward toward the manifestation of God which preceded them, despite the fact that their major motivation was rearward. If they were to *flee*,

they had to *march forward*. They became used to following God's theophany, the fire and the cloud.

Psychologically, they were still slaves of Egypt, always tempted to look backward at their former home and former masters, but because they had been ejected, they were forced to pay attention to the leadership of God. Psychologically speaking, they were marching *out of* Egypt more than they were *marching toward* Canaan. *But the discipline of marching was basic to their training*: a means of transforming their vision and motivation. (Marching is a universally recognized means of training military recruits.) The King James Version says that they went up "harnessed" out of the land of Egypt, but a better translation is provided by the Berkeley Version: "In martial order the Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 13:18b). Cassuto translated it: "in orderly array."[1] James Jordan commented: "When Israel marched out of Egypt, she marched five in a rank. The term translated 'battle array' in Exodus 13:18 actually means 'five in a rank' (cf. also Josh. 1:14; 4:12; Jud. 7:11; Num. 32:17)."[2] God was treating them as recruits are treated in basic training: marching them in an orderly fashion, under the leadership of a drill instructor. They were to learn the art of war through the discipline of enforced marching, visible leadership, and a carefully staged "obstacle course." That obstacle course was the Red Sea. Later, their obstacle course was the wilderness.

B. Three Types of Slavery

Earthly slavery, as manifested clearly in the history of the exodus, involves at least three factors: slavery to food, slavery to the past, and slavery to the present. The Hebrews cursed Moses, for he had served them as a deliverer. He had enabled them to cast off the chains of bondage. They looked to the uncertainty that lay before them (the Red Sea) and the chariots behind them, and they wailed. They had lost what they regarded as external security in Egypt, a welfare state existence, and they resented Moses' leadership. They had no confidence in God and God's promised future. Looking resolutely over their shoulders, they stumbled at the very border of freedom, the Red Sea. Fearing death in freedom, this generation died in the wilderness. Better to serve in Egypt than die in the desert, they proclaimed. God then proved to all but Caleb and Joshua, who never believed in this

1. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, [1951] 1974), pp. 156–57.

2. James Jordan, *The Geneva Papers*, No. 25 (Feb. 1984), [p. 3].

slave slogan, that it was much better to die in the wilderness than to serve in Egypt. Best of all, God showed the next generation, was the conquest of Canaan. But the Israelites of Moses' day could not see that far into the future; they saw only the past and the present—a present bounded, they believed, by Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea. What they saw as the end of their lives was in fact only an obstacle course.

1. Slaves to Food

Once they had been delivered from their Egyptian enemies, they were determined to keep their heads riveted to the rear anyway. They were stiffnecked indeed. No longer able to hear the rumble of Egyptian chariots, they were deafened by the rumbling of their stomachs. Better to have died in Egypt, they complained, "when we did eat bread to the full," than to die in the wilderness (Ex. 16:3). They had short memories about their former condition. So, the Lord gave them manna. "Not good enough," came the cries. "We need meat. In Egypt, we had garlic and onions and leeks and melons. Mere manna, even if accompanied by liberty, can hardly compare." So, God gave them meat for a month—so much, He promised them. that it would come out of their nostrils, and they would loathe it (Num. 11:4–6, 18–21).

Their problem was not a protein deficiency. Their problem was a theological deficiency. Their god was their belly (Phil. 3:19). Their stiff necks did not permit them to look up to the heavens and rejoice in the source of their manna.

The fact that man needs food in order to live indicates that he is a creature. Ascetic fasting, designed to free the individual from his dependence on food, is simply one more example of man's blasphemous move to transcend his creaturehood.[3] Food and drink in Scripture, from Eden to the New Jerusalem, signify man's dependence on God, the Source of all life. Thus, the mere fact that Israel needed food, and that they asked Moses and God for it, was not sinful in itself, and might otherwise have been an act of faith. What is clear, however, is that they did not see food as a gift of God, and its lack as a token

3. Several examples of mystics who live virtually without food are offered in Paramhansa Yogananda's popular book, *The Autobiography of a Yogi* (Los Angeles: Self-Realization Fellowship, [1946] 1971). The most impressive is the case of Roman Catholic mystic and stigmatic Therese Neumann of Konnersreuth: pp. 367–75. Yogananda cited other books about her: *Therese Neumann: A Stigmatist of Our Day and Further Chronicles of Therese Neumann*, by Friederich Ritter von Lama, and A. P. Schimberg's *The Story of Therese Neumann*, all published by the Bruce Publishing Co. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; cf. Johannes Steiner, *Therese Neumann* (Staten Island, New York: Alba House).

of God's displeasure; rather, they saw food as a thing in itself. Their affections were placed preeminently on the creature, not the Creator. Satisfaction of physical hunger was more important to them than the obtaining of spiritual and eternal life from the life-giver. Repeatedly God withheld food from them. Repeatedly they did not ask for food in faith. Repeatedly they complained against God and Moses, and expressed a preference for Egypt. They never got the message.

Manna was a special kind of food. It was provided for them supernaturally. It was scheduled to appear predictably. It was also exceedingly plain—*the kind of food that is provided to an army in the field*. In World War II, the United States Army's all-to-familiar canned C-rations became the objects of scorn and jokes, just so long as they were delivered on time. The U.S. Army was the best-fed army in history up to that time, but the boring food, especially the canned food that was the common fare when men were in the battlefield, was resented by the troops, unless a crisis occurred which cut them off from new supplies.[4] Israel resented manna, for the Israelites did not see themselves as an army on a battlefield. Their memories of special occasional meals in Egypt chased away their memories of bondage. They had developed a taste for slavery, literally.

2. Slaves to the Past

How could they have forgotten the grinding bondage of their former state? Could they learn nothing from history? In a word, no. Historiography is an intellectual reconstruction that man attempts, and he hopes that his reconstruction resembles the actual events of the past. But, being an intellectual reconstruction, it is dependent upon a philosophical foundation for accurate interpretation. The events of history teach nothing to those who are blind to God's sovereignty over these events. Or more accurately, their interpretation teaches something that is inaccurate.[5]

The Israelites told Moses that death in Egypt would have been preferable to the responsibilities of godly liberty. The pain of dying would have been over by now, they complained. Wouldn't the graves of Egypt have been preferable (Ex. 14:11)? They faced the respon-

4. The United States soldier was also the most heavily laden foot soldier in history: 84 pounds of equipment. William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), p. 281.

5. C. Gregg Singer, "The Problem of Historical Interpretation," in Gary North (ed.), *Foundations of Christian Scholarship: Essays in the Van Til Perspective* (Vallecito, California: Ross House Books, 1976), ch. 4.

sibilities of life, and they grumbled. They were blinded by a false vision of the past. They preferred to live in terms of historical fantasy rather than face the realities of life. They preferred to remember their bondage in Egypt as a golden age by comparison, thereby trading the opportunities of the present for the imaginary comforts of the past. Is it any wonder that God imposed upon them the ritual observance of the Passover? Mouthing words that they did not really understand, the fathers of that generation transmitted a true vision of the past to their children. The mandatory bitter herbs were educational.

3. Slaves to the Present

The laws of the Old Testament recognized the existence of psychological slavery. Restrictions were placed on the administration of that institution. The case laws of the Old Testament begin with the laws of slavery (Ex. 21). Slavery was never intended to be normative for the people of God. Debtors who sold themselves into slavery went free in the seventh (sabbatical) year (Deut. 15:2).[6] Criminals who went into slavery to payoff the restitution payment owed to the victim could be kept in slavery until the debt was finally paid,[7] but criminal acts were not considered normative for Israel. It took a special vow, marked by a hole punched in the slave's ear, to place a man in voluntary lifetime slavery (Ex. 21:5–6). The biblical injunction regarding slavery is seen in Paul's assertion that a godly man should accept an offer of freedom from his master (I Cor. 7:21–22).[8] The exercise of *godly dominion under God* is made more effective by *widespread personal freedom*.

There is little doubt that the affairs of this life are burdensome. If getting out of life's burdens were the essence of human life, then death would be preferable to life. Paul recognized this fact even more clearly than the murmuring Hebrews did. Yet he made it clear that the present responsibilities of godly service were more important than his desire to depart from the body to be with Christ (Phil. 1:22–26). As a free man, Paul saw the burdens of the present as an opportunity. He was to serve God as an instrument for the extension of God's kingdom. He did not think it proper to escape prematurely from this earthly service in order to enjoy heaven's rest.

6. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 36.

7. James Jordan, *Slavery in Biblical Perspective* (Master's Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1980), p. 80.

8 Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 8.

C. Slaves to the Future

The Bible tells us that we are to be slaves to the future. *Life, despite its petty burdens, is a resource.* Free men are not chained to life; they are users of it. Servants of a sovereign God are to be free men, and free men use life as a means of attaining *long-run victory*, both personally and covenantally, in the final day, and also in time and on earth. Life is like a high-powered rifle that is painful to fire because of the recoil. In the hands of God's servant, life has a specific purpose. It is an instrument of victory. However painful it may be to fire, the godly man knows that it is much more painful for those on the "receiving end." Better to suffer the pain of a recoiling rifle than its projectile. Our task is to aim the weapon and pull the trigger. God will heal our bruised shoulders just as surely as he will guide the bullets to their predestined targets.

To the victors go the spoils. The Hebrews of Moses' day should have learned this on the night of the exodus. Joshua and Caleb learned this lesson well. Their contemporaries were overtaken in the wilderness by death, the event they had feared most, for their fear of the present had blinded their vision of the spoils of Canaan which lay ahead.

Future-orientation marks the free man's perspective. He makes decisions in terms of the future, has confidence in the future, and can happily sacrifice present income for increased income in the future. As a responsible agent in God's kingdom, *the redeemed man is motivated more by future successes than by present enjoyments*. The uncertainties of life are less of a threat to him than the certainties of the welfare state and slavery. To remain in bondage to Satan, whose destruction in the future is sure, is to remain earth-bound, and ultimately present-bound psychologically. A future-oriented man or culture is operating in terms of a perspective which is innately biblical, for it is Satan's goal to squander his assets in the present, given his inevitable defeat in the future. It is Satan who revels in the present, dreaming of his triumphs in the past. He shudders at his prospects for the future.

Joseph's bondage was external, not mental. The same was true of the three young Hebrews in the court of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was a captive, but he continued to wind up in positions of authority. Again and again, *external bondage became a training ground for external victory*, precisely because the bondage was merely external rather than psychological. Psychological bondage, a reflection of spiritual bondage to sin, is a more powerful form of bondage than physical bondage.

Conclusion

The Hebrews of Moses' day had become slaves psychologically because they had become slaves to sin and slaves to a false religion, the escapist religion. Having abandoned hope in the future, they clung mentally to the past. They hoped continually to return to the bondage of the past in order to escape the burdens of the present.

Joshua and Caleb also resented the burdens of the present, but their focus was the promised victory in Canaan. Their chief burden in the present was the past-orientation of their fellow Hebrews. They had to wait for God to leave that generation in the dust of the wilderness before they could begin to organize the victory of the future. They had learned the lesson of the Red Sea. They had no desire to hear God's words again, the words He had spoken to Moses: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" (Ex. 14:15). But their contemporaries never learned that lesson, even after the army of their former masters had perished in the waters. As psychological slaves, they resisted unto the end God's call for them to go forward. The best they could manage was wandering around in a 40-year circle.

We need to recognize the extraordinary power of the psychology of slavery. For at least 80 years, the Hebrews in Egypt had been in physical bondage. When Moses returned from the wilderness, they did not want his deliverance. They did not want God's deliverance. They much preferred life in Egyptian slavery, despite its hardships. Their commitment to sin and slavery was to last an additional 40 years after the exodus. So powerful is the psychology of slavery, which is a manifestation of the escapist religion, that it took at least 120 years to stamp it out in Israel. They were bondservants to a false religion—escapist religion—and also bondservants to sin, bondservants to the Egyptians, and bondservants to fear. They had adopted certain aspects of Egyptian religion and culture—the longing for leeks and onions and golden calves[9]—and their separation from these false gods was not purged out by the first Passover or the 39 that followed. The leaven of Egypt was still with them until the day that all but two of them died in the wilderness.

There is an alliance between power religion and escapist religion. The *psychology of tyranny* is the other side of the ethically rebellious coin of the *psychology of slavery*, just as sadism is the other side of mas-

9. Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), pp. 56–57.

ochism. Bullies need victims. The power religionists and the escapist religionists need each other.

17

THE METAPHOR OF GROWTH: ETHICS

> *Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.*
>
> EXODUS 15:17

The theocentric foundation of the imagery of agricultural planting is God as the supreme planter of the field. The land serves as God's set-apart sanctuary for His set-apart sanctified people.

A. Nature Reflects Man

The sociologist-historian Robert Nisbet wrote: "There has never been a time in Western thought when the image of social change has not been predominantly biological in nature."[1] Even his use of the English-language phrase, "in nature," is revealing of the influence of the metaphor; he means, as we all do, "in form" or "in essence," or "fundamentally," but we all frequently substitute the phrase "in nature." The power of the metaphor of nature is very great, intellectually and linguistically.

The Bible uses the language of biological processes in order to communicate certain truths concerning the affairs of mankind. Such terms as "planting," "grass," and "seed" are fairly common. The Bible unquestionably describes the processes of social change in the language of biological growth and decay. It does not use the imagery of the machine, which has been the primary alternative metaphor to organic change that has been used by Western humanists ever since

1. Robert A. Nisbet, *Prejudices: A Philosophical Dictionary* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 274.

the Newtonian revolution. Nevertheless, the Bible does not teach that mankind is a reflection of nature, or that the affairs of man are reflections of nature's processes. The reverse is the case. *Man is the archetype of nature, not the other way around.* Nature's processes are analogous to man's.

Man's mortality does appear to be analogous to the processes of a cursed earth, of growth and decay, and his certain aspects of man's institutions also resemble living and dying biological organisms. *But the essence of man is not his mortality.* The essence of man is his position as God's agent of dominion over creation. Man is a creature made in God's image. Man's rebellion led to the curse of nature, for nature is covenantally subordinate to man. Nature is afflicted with the process of growth and decay as a result of man's ethical rebellion. Both man and nature were cursed by God in response to this ethical rebellion (Gen. 3:17–19).[2] Therefore, we ought to conclude that *man's mortality is analogous to the processes of nature, not because nature is normative, but because man is.*

B. Social Sanctification

The Bible affirms the existence of *social change that advances ideally from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity.* This process is inescapably *ethical.* The Bible sets forth ethical standards in the law of God, and the extent to which people approach these standards in their daily activities determines their moral progress. Spiritual maturity is imputed to man at the time of regeneration,[3] but working out one's salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12b), in time and on earth, is the basis of a man's progressive sanctification.[4] Progressive sanctification cannot lead to perfection on this side of the grave.

What is true for the individual is also true for a society. Adherence

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2. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 12.

3. *The Collected Writings of John Murray*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977), II, ch. 21: "Definitive Sanctification." Speaking of the antithesis between moral regeneration and moral bondage, Murray wrote: "There is no possibility of toning down the antithesis; it appears all along the line of the varying aspects from which life and action are to be viewed. In respect of every criterion by which moral and spiritual life is to be assessed, there is absolute differentiation. This means that there is a decisive and definitive breach with the power and service of sin in the case of every one who has come under the control of the provisions of grace" (p. 208). In short, progressive sanctification in the life of an individual begins with definitive sanctification.

4. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, [1980] 2010), pp. 48–52 See also John Murray, *Collected Writings*, II, ch. 23: "Progressive Sanctification."

to biblical law brings beneficial developments throughout the society's institutions. Conversely, widespread departure from adherence to biblical law brings God's historic judgment and social contraction. The external blessings are removed by God. Thus, it is not a case of social "birth, growth, senility, death, and decay," but rather grace (external blessings), covenantal faithfulness, added blessings in response to faithfulness, temptation, and then, if Satan's temptation is successful, covenantal rebellion, followed by God's judgment (Deut. 8[5] and 28[6]).

Thus, there can be no greater contrast between true religion and false religion as it applies to social theory than the distinction between the *metaphor of biological growth* and the *metaphor of spiritual growth* from immaturity to maturity. What takes place in man's social institutions is a reflection of the society's adherence or rejection of the terms of the covenant—a covenant that is expressly *ethical and judicial*. This is one of the most important underlying themes in my entire commentary.

Nevertheless, we do find that the language of agriculture is used by the biblical writers to describe spiritual and institutional development. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church: "I have planted, and Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (I Cor. 3:6). We need to understand the differences between the Bible's use of such biological language and the seemingly similar use of such terms by pagan social theorists.

C. Planting

"Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established" (Ex. 15:17). The translators of the King James Version capitalized "Sanctuary," which seems to imply that Moses was speaking of the temple. Psalm 78:53–54 provides evidence that "sanctuary" should not be capitalized, because it refers in this case to *the land of Israel itself*: "And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased." The Berkeley version translates verse 54: "He brought them to His holy domain, to the mountain which His right hand had gained." The passage refers, then, to a *special land* in which God's

5. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 18.

6. *Ibid.*, ch. 69.

people would dwell with Him. God intended to plant His people in this land. The metaphor of planting is a familiar one in the Bible. It is related to the metaphor of growth, which was understood by ancient pagan cultures. While the Hebrew metaphor was similar in language to those pagan metaphors of agricultural prosperity, there were important differences in usage. These differences stemmed from the differing conceptions of the creation.

The Hebrews believed that God created the universe out of nothing. God's sovereignty in the fiat act of creation therefore guarantees His total sovereignty over the affairs of history. The doctrine of creation out of nothing implies the doctrine of God's providence. History is *linear*—creation, Fall, redemption (incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension), partial restoration, final judgment, total restoration—and it is totally *personal*. The Fall of man was seen as being ethical, an act of man's will in defiance of God. This Fall was not understood as a product of some flaw in nature, for nature had been created good. The Fall of man resulted in the judgment by God of both man and his environment, but the cause was man's ethical rebellion. Ethical restoration, which involves personal repentance and adherence to God's covenant, was promised by God. The original peace of nature will return (Isa. 11:6–9).

Restoration therefore meant to the Hebrews the eventual victory of God in time and on earth. The New Testament's vision is the same (Rom. 8:18–23).[7]

Pagan cosmologies did not share this view of creation. God was not seen as the Creator who brought the creation out of nothing. Matter, whether in the form of raw chaos, or water, or a cosmic egg, was seen as co-eternal with "god." This god's victory over chaos at the time of "creation" (the emergence of "ordered being")—the "original time"[8] —was viewed as a continuous process. God cannot guarantee the outcome of the struggle between order and chaos. He cannot

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7. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 5.

8. The subject of pagan man's concept of "original time," the time of the creation, is treated in most of the books by Mircea Eliade, but especially in *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), and in *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, [1957] 1961), ch. 2: "Sacred Time and Myths." Pagan men in primitive cultures have long believed that they can participate in this original time through special rituals, especially chaos festivals. It is significant that neither Judaism nor Christianity celebrates the creation ritually, nor does it appear in their religious calendars. The creation is understood as exclusively the work of God.

guarantee the outcome, because he himself is finite. Historical change is neither linear nor absolutely personal; it is inherently cyclical. The Fall of man was not primarily ethical, but metaphysical. A flaw in nature was involved. Man is now imprisoned in the bondage of time. Covenant-breaking man's goal is therefore *self-transcendence through overcoming time*—its abolition, generally through ritual chaos. Out of chaos came time, structure, and order; out of the progressive bondage of order will come a new chaos, which will then renew law-burdened order.[9] The two are eternal equals in many pagan cosmologies.

This dialectical tension between chaos and order is reflected in the natural processes of growth and decay. Eternal repetition swallows up historical development and historical meaning. The seasons of nature therefore become normative, both culturally and religiously. The importance of fertility rituals to ancient paganism was based on a particular view of the origin of being. It was a view not shared by the Hebrews.

D. Grass and Seed

In contrast to the normative processes of nature, which pagan cosmologies proclaimed, stood the Hebrew metaphor *grass*. David used grass to illustrate the universal extension of God's kingdom: "...they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth" (Ps. 72:16b). Yet, in other passages, the wicked are compared to another aspect of grass, something to be cut down (Ps. 37:2, 28). Man's transitoriness, in contrast to God's eternal word, is compared to withering grass (Isa. 40:6–8; cf. I Pet. 1:24–25). The uses of the metaphor of grass are *ethical* in intent.

Another metaphor of growth can be found in the Hebrews' metaphor of the *seed*. The generations of man are described as seed (Gen. 9:9; 13:16, etc.). Both cultural progress and cultural decline, being functions of man's ethical response to God's law rather than the products of forces in nature, are also characterized by the metaphor of growth and decay. The language of agriculture is used to describe both cultural destruction (Jer. 7:20; 8:13; Ezek. 17:1–10) and cultural restoration (Ezek. 17:23–24; Jer. 17:7–8). Cultural destruction and cultural restoration are God's responses to the ethical decisions of whole nations or populations.

The New Testament uses the metaphor of the seed in several pas-

9. In addition to Eliade's books that deal with this theme, see Roger Caillois, *Man and the Sacred* (New York: Free Press, 1959). On man's attempt to achieve self-transcendence through the abolition of "normal" or "profane" time, see Gary North, *Unholy Spirits: Occultism and New Age Humanism* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1986), ch. 9.

sages. The parable of the sower focuses on the effects of the various environments on four seeds that are scattered (Matt. 13:3–8).

Another parable using the sower focuses on two different kinds of seeds that are planted by two rival sowers in the same field, the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13:24–30).[10] Obviously, these agricultural metaphors are only metaphors. They are used in varying ways to drive home spiritual points. They point to time's role in the process of maturation.

Paul used the metaphor of domestic agriculture to make his case for the restoration and victory of the kingdom of God. He used the metaphor of the wild olive branch, which is grafted into the root. His goal was to describe the relationship historically between the Jews and the gentiles. The regrafting in of the elect Jews at the end of the era of the gentiles is seen by Paul as the foundation of external reconstruction and victory—the basis of Paul's eschatological optimism (Rom. 11:17–27).[11] His usage of the metaphor makes it plain that *the whole process is unnatural*. God, as the plant domesticator, does not graft the domesticated branch into the wild root, which is the traditional agricultural practice. He grafts the wild olive branch (gentiles) into the original root (covenant Israel).[12] Not the process of growth and decay, but the *calculated, purposeful intervention* of the active tree-grafter, is Paul's point. Natural or even traditional practices are not normative. *God's sovereignty is normative*.

E. Classical Culture and Cycles

The possibility of external progress was set before the Hebrew nation very early. This promise involved the possibility of *long-term economic development as the product of long-term covenantal faithfulness to God's laws*. Pagan cultures, including the Greeks and the Romans, took the cyclical processes of nature as normative, and never were able to develop a progressive philosophy of time.[13] They were unable to believe in the

10. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 29.

11. North, *Cooperation and Dominion*, ch. 7.

12. John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1965), II, pp. 84–90.

13. Ludwig Edelstein argued in his posthumously published book, *The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins Press, 1967), that the Greeks and Romans did not all believe in cyclical time, and that some of the prominent philosophers did believe that some linear progress is possible indefinitely. His evidence is weak, however. He had to admit that Plato and Aristotle held to a cyclical view of time, and that rampant skepticism throughout later Greek culture militated against a

possibility of long-term, cumulative social and economic progress.[14] To believe in such a possibility, they would have had to abandon their commitment to the twin doctrines of cycles and impersonal fate.[15]

In the debate over whether classical civilization was or was not committed to the ultimate pessimism of cycles, this much is clear: the historians of classical Greece have not been able to produce evidence of a confident commitment to *the idea of inescapable progress*, or a doctrine of ultimate victory by man over nature. Nisbet's book, *History of the Idea of Progress*, presents worthy examples of fragments from classical authors that proclaimed some progress by man over the ages, and the possibility of continuing progress—if not for mankind in general, then at least for the beneficiaries of classical culture.[16] But to maintain that the classical world did not adopt almost completely the idea of historical cycles makes it very difficult to explain the Renaissance's rejection of linear history. Nisbet himself wrote: "From Augustine down to the modern world, with the exception of the Renaissance, when cyclical conceptions of history crowded out the linear scheme inherent in the idea of progress, these ideas have been powerful in impact, adhered to by some of the greatest minds in Western history."[17] But the

widespread belief in progress. There is no question that neither the Greeks nor the Romans had any concept of time that is exclusively linear—beginning, meaningful time, and final judgment—or that is necessarily progressive, meaning beneficial to mankind, in the long run. Greek and Roman society maintained the annual chaos festivals until the very end, which Edelstein fails to mention. This points to the cultural and religious commitment of classical civilization to a cyclical view of time. On the cyclical views of Greek science, see Stanley Jaki, *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), ch. 2.

14. I am here taking exception with Robert Nisbet's excellent book, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), ch. 1. He followed Edelstein, W. K. C. Guthrie, M. I. Finley, and his own teacher, Frederick Teggart, in arguing that there were philosophers in Greece and Rome who held out the possibility of cumulative increases in men's knowledge, technological improvements, and even moral improvement over time. He rejected the thesis that classical thought was dominated by a notion of cyclical time, as argued by John Baillie, F. M. Cornford, W. R. Inge, R. G. Collingwood, and J. B. Bury, Nisbet's intellectual enemy in this debate. He saw the myth of Prometheus, the god who gave mankind fire, as the archetypal example of human advancement: pp. 17–18.

15. On the collapse of the ancient world's philosophical base, which led to the collapse of classical civilization, see Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study in Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1944] 1957). Reprinted by Liberty Press, Indianapolis.

16. Cochrane pointed to the Roman poet Vergil as one who believed Rome might break out of the familiar cycle of growth and decay, to become eternal Rome. The Empire's universality might lead to a permanence that other empires had failed to achieve. *Ibid.*, pp. 68–73.

17. Nisbet, *Prejudices*, pp. 239–40.

Renaissance was a self-conscious revival of pagan antiquity. How was it, then, that Renaissance scholars so completely misinterpreted the conception of non-cyclical history that Nisbet thought was held by Greek and Roman thinkers? It is easier to believe—and much easier to demonstrate through the primary source documents of classical culture—that Renaissance scholars knew their religious forefathers well.

What no one has yet produced is any evidence that classical culture possessed any concept of *dominion*, in time and on earth, comparable to that held by the Old Testament authors and New Testament writers. The idea that an exclusive group of people is under the special care of an omnipotent God, and that this God has covenanted with them, guaranteeing comprehensive victory, on earth and in heaven, to His people, simply was absent in classical authors. They had no such view of God's sovereignty. Furthermore, according to Cochrane, "for classical idealism, the very possibility of growth is restricted to individuals; communal or social development in the sense envisaged by modern liberalism is completely beyond its horizon."[18] The end was faith in the superman, the divine Caesar, an idea with its roots in Greek thought,[19] as the figure who could bring permanence to Rome, the long-sought Pax Romana. At best, Rome might not capitulate "to the Great God *Whirl,* the terror of the 'political' mind."[20] Only *luck*, in its war with inexorable fate and inevitable chance, had made possible the advent of Caesar Augustus.[21]

Thus, the Hebrews and Christians held to a concept of development which was unique in the ancient world. They believed that progress is inevitable if and when men conform themselves covenantally to the God of the Bible.

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18. Cochrane, *Christianity*, p. 103. Cochrane wrote of Livy: "It is hardly necessary to comment upon the intense conservatism implied in such a view of human life. It betrays an utter lack of faith in the goodness of any possible 'world to come' and invites men to conform to established models. . . . One result of this is to engender a fear and hatred of social change, regardless of its character and potentiality; and, with Livy, this manifests itself in a disposition to condemn as pernicious every tendency to innovation." *Ibid.*, p. 104.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–11.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 103. See especially Cochrane's analysis of the crisis of the third century, A.D.: ch. 4.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

F. The Concept of Economic Growth

Redeemed man's hope is in continual internal and external progress, including economic growth (Deut. 8:6–9).[22] The promise is ultimate external victory (Isa. 66:22). Even the normal processes of nature will be overcome by the healing power of God's grace, as hostile animals will find peace with each other (Isa. 65:25).[23] The kind of progress which the Bible denies is the progress hoped for by the drunkard, a concept of progress which is autonomous: "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant" (Isa. 56:12).[24] This kind of progress cannot be sustained. God judges it.

Economic growth is always under severe restraints. Compound growth rates of 5% per annum cannot continue for centuries.[25] But it is valid to expect continual blessings in response to continued faithfulness to God's laws. Economic growth is not an autonomous process that can be engineered into a society. It is the product of a world-and-life view that can be adopted by a society.

There is an additional problem for humanist economics. The Christian economist believes that the mind of God is comprehensive and normative. God can make plans and evaluate economic growth, and man, who is made in God's image, can also make plans and evaluate aggregate growth, though not perfectly.[26] The blessings of God that appear in the form of increased numbers of cattle or other assets are meaningful because of the plan of God. He imputes value to certain material objects, and therefore when individuals increase their holdings of them, they are indeed better off than before.

The subjectivist economist has no consistent way to be sure that economic growth is a blessing. Some economists, such as E. J. Mishan, reject the idea that economic growth is beneficial. But the problem is deeper than simply evaluating the costs and benefits of growth. Is the metaphor of growth even applicable to the economy, given the presuppositions of subjectivism?

The extreme subjectivist, Ludwig Lachmann, recommended that

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22. North, *Inheritance and Dominion*, chaps. 19, 20.

23. Gary North, *Restoration and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on the Prophets* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 16.

24. *Ibid.*, ch. 14.

25. Gary North, "The Theology of the Exponential Curve," *The Freeman* (May 1970); reprinted in North, *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), ch. 8.

26. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 5:E.

economists abandon the whole concept. He did speak of "economic progress," which he defined as "an increase in real income per head."[27] Yet even this is illegitimate. How can we divide "heads" into "real income," since we cannot even define "real income" without resorting to aggregates, index numbers, and similar anti-subjectivist concepts. But even if subjectivist economists could define such concepts, Lachmann's warning should make them hesitate. No model of a uniformly expanding or growing economy is valid. "This model embodies the notion of 'growth,' of progress at a known and *expected* rate. Its significance for the real world, however, is doubtful. Already the metaphor 'growth' is singularly inappropriate to the real world, as it suggests a process during which the harmony of proportions remains undisturbed."[28] He asked: How can we be sure that there is harmony? Sometimes capital is malinvested—just before a depression, for example. Some capital is reduced in value by economic change; other capital assets appreciate. How can we "tally up" these changes in the value of capital? Only if there is harmony—a fitting together of personal plans into a coherent whole—can we use the metaphor of growth. But the radical subjectivist does not believe in any such harmonious aggregate. Economic aggregates are mythical in a world of consistent subjectivism. We cannot make interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility, or interpersonal comparisons of subjective plans, given the tenets of subjective economics. There is no plan of God in their system to provide the necessary unity and coherence. Thus, the metaphor of growth is misleading, Lachmann said. Growth or a tree or plant is orderly. It is governed by a genetic code. An economy has no similar regulative principle, the subjectivist has to say, if he is consistent. Few are.

The Christian can legitimately use the metaphor of growth, precisely because he believes in the sovereignty of God. While his explanation of the origins of growth should be based on ethics rather than the mind of man or some other creaturely source, he can use this universal metaphor to make sense of the world. "More is better," *if* it is the product of righteousness, and *if* it does not become a snare and a delusion.

Long-term economic growth is normative. The cyclical pattern of growth and decay, progress and regress, being hostile to the idea

27. Ludwig Lachmann, *Capital and Its Structure* (Kansas City, Kansas: Sheed Andrews and McMee1, [1956] 1977), p. 17.

28. *Idem*.

of the ethical covenant between God and man, is not the standard for a godly culture. The possibility of economic, social, military, and agricultural collapse always faces a covenantally faithful people—a warning of what will inevitably happen should they rebel against the terms of God's covenant (Deut. 28:15–68). Nevertheless, the cyclical pattern of prosperity and depression, which denies the possibility of perpetual expansion, is normative only for covenantally rebellious cultures. God nowhere says that all societies will conform historically to the cyclical pattern. *Covenantal dominion is expansionist*.

Economic growth is the inescapable product of the extension of God's kingdom. That the Protestant Reformation, and especially Puritan Calvinism, produced historically unprecedented economic growth, was not a random correlation.[29] Because nature is under the curse, and therefore limited, such compound growth cannot be an eternal process. Such expansion therefore points to an end of time, the end of the limits of our curse-induced scarcity. *Such growth therefore points to a coming judgment, a cessation of the processes of the cursed earth*. Paganism's attempt to substitute endless cycles of growth and decay is an ancient ploy to blind men to the reality of final judgment. The modern version of this ancient philosophy is the "zero growth" philosophy.[30] By abandoning the pagan use of the metaphor of growth—a metaphor which of necessity includes decay—and replacing it with a biblical version, which relates ethical conformity to God's law with external dominion and expansion, godly men remind ungodly men of the coming judgment. Growth will end when time does; growth clearly cannot go on forever.

29. On this point, see Max Weber's classic study, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner's, [1904–05] 1958). For a defense of Weber against those who have criticized his thesis, see Gary North, "The 'Protestant Ethic' Hypothesis," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, III (Summer 1976). For documentation concerning the applicability of Weber's hypothesis in American colonial Puritanism, see my three essays on Puritan economic thought and practice in New England, 1630–1720, in *ibid*., vol. V, no. 2; vol. VI, nos. 1, 2.

30. The most widely read example of this zero-growth philosophy is Dennis Meadows, *et al., The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972). The book is subtitled: *A Report for the Club of Rome on the Predicament of Mankind*. It was a kind of "media event" in the early 1970s. Another example of this sort of analysis is *Entropy: A New World View*, by Jeremy Rifkin and Ted Howard (New York: Bantam New Age Book, 1980). The most forceful defense of zero economic growth is E. J. Mishan's book, *The Economic Growth Debate: An Assessment* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977).

Conclusion

God will plant His people in the mountain of His inheritance, which will be the whole earth. This is the ultimate use of the metaphor of growth in the Bible. The individual blades of grass will wither and die, but the grass itself—the fields of grass—will spread. The earth will become the promised garden. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Isa. 35:1). "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations" (Isa. 61:11).

18

MANNA, PREDICTABILITY, AND DOMINION

> *Then said the* Lord *unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.*
>
> EXODUS 16:4–5

The theocentric focus of this passage is God as the supplier of food. God is the sanctions-bringer: point four of the biblical covenant.[1]

A. The Slave's Life

As former slaves in Egypt, the Hebrews had become accustomed to certain features of slave life. *First*, they had been assigned *regular tasks* by their masters. For the most part, these tasks had involved minimal creativity. The imperial bureaucracy had not been geared to local autonomy and individual responsibility of its slaves. The bureaucratic structure had to be predictable, from top to bottom. Deviations from the central plan had to be minimized.

Second, they had been supplied with *tools and raw materials*. This had increased their productivity, since it had increased the division of labor. Capital investments had come from the state. Only as a form of punishment did the Pharaoh of Moses' day impose the requirement that they produce bricks without straw (Ex. 5:18). This reduced the division of labor within the slave community, which thereby increased

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 4. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2010), ch. 4.

the efforts of the slave population to produce the same quantity of bricks.[2] Their productivity was therefore dependent on the continuing support of a bureaucratic state.

Third, they had been supplied with *food*. This food had been supplied to them on a regular, predictable basis. Some of this food they produced on their own. They owned cattle (Ex. 9:4), sheep (Ex. 12:3), and crops. We presume that they grew crops, since the hail and fire consumed crops in Egypt, but not in Goshen, where the Hebrews resided (Ex. 9:25–26). Despite their own food supplies, they were nonetheless dependent, as all Egyptians were, on the state, for the state owned all the land, except that owned by the priests (Gen. 47:20–22). Furthermore, the predictable waters of the Nile, which were controlled by the state through irrigation projects and canals, made possible agricultural production in Egypt.[3] We can surmise that whenever the slaves were engaged on building projects located away from Goshen, the taskmasters must have maintained discipline by controlling access to food supplies. Controlling men's access to food is a traditional means of control in slave societies.

The Hebrews experienced *the static world of slavery*. It was a society that did not systematically reward individual initiative and creativity. It was a society dominated by the decisions of senior officials. The Hebrew slave society was dependent on the representatives of foreign gods. A man's calling was established by the state. Egypt was governed by the annual cycle of the Nile, which in turn was understood to be under the control of a divine monarch, whose daily ritual observances determined even the rising of the sun. It was a culture that had no doctrine of progress, which built huge public works projects, and which concentrated its attention on death.

B. Deliverance from Slavery and into Freedom

God had called them out of this static world. Their response was predictable for slaves: *longing for the past*. They lodged their bitter complaints against God, although indirectly (Ex. 16:8). Moses took the brunt of the criticism. They resented the inhospitable world of the wilderness. Their familiar surroundings were gone. The wilderness was a sparse land. No taskmasters supplied them with instructions,

2. Chapter 7.

3. Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study on Total Power* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1957), discusses several ancient civilizations that were tyrannies based on the centralized control of water by the state.

tools, raw materials, and food. Constant wandering denied them access to a fixed piece of land. Their new environment was filled with risks. New skills were needed to survive; self-reliance and self-confidence had to be built up over time. Again and again, the Hebrews complained that God had brought them out of slavery in order to kill them (Ex. 14:11; 16:3; 17:3). *They had no self-confidence because they had no confidence in the God who had delivered them.*

This slave population was not equipped psychologically to assume the heavy responsibilities of godly reconstruction. They lacked two primary requirements of successful reconstruction: (1) *optimism* concerning the future; and (2) a concept of God-revealed, reliable *law*. To subdue the earth, they needed a doctrine of law under God's sovereign authority, and the world under God's law. Law is a tool of social reconstruction that involves a progressive reduction in society's reliance upon miracles. Simultaneously, the more predictable fruits of adherence to biblical law elevates to normality the benefits of the miraculous, such as abundance, health, long life, and the absence of disasters. Adherence to the law requires an increase of maturity on the part of those laboring to rebuild, yet it is itself the source of this spiritual maturity. Since the existence of a revealed law-order and the visible external results of the imposition of this law-order have to be understood as a sign of God's presence and ultimate sovereignty, man's need for miraculous intervention—"signs"—is reduced. As slaves, the Hebrews clung to the signs of God's presence, requiring endless miracles by God to protect them. Even with the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day, they were not satisfied. They kept crying, in effect, "What has God done for us lately?"

C. Manna vs. the Slave Psychology

Manna was necessary to break this psychology of slavery. Manna filled the bellies of the exodus generation, but for the younger generation, the manna served as a means of transforming their minds.

1. Regular Miracles

First, they received their *daily bread*. It was simple, tasty, and predictable to the point of monotony. Second, its appearance in the midst of a wilderness involved a *daily miracle*—a phenomenon not normally available to nomads. Their new taskmaster, God, supplied their needs as a display of His sovereignty over them. Furthermore, a weekly miracle was added: a double portion on the sixth day, and nothing on the

seventh. The manna, which would rot if kept overnight on the other five days, was preserved for the sabbath meal (Ex. 16:17–26).

The Hebrews could not store up large portions of manna, since it would rot within 24 hours. They had to rely totally on God, even as they had been forced to rely on Egypt's bureaucracy, Egypt's irrigation, and Egypt's gods. Modern "critical" biblical scholarship is intensely hostile to such a view of manna. The element of the miraculous appalls modern scholars. They want the regularities of biblical law, but without God, and certainly without God's alteration of the familiar regularities of nature. A typical statement from the world of secular scholarship is found in F. S. Bodenheimer's 1947 article on manna: "In Exodus 16 and Numbers 11 we find reports of manna in the desert. Some believe that this manna was similar to bread and that it was furnished in quantities large enough to feed a whole people. Others regard it as a natural phenomenon which contributed to the diet of the Israelites in the desert. Only the latter view permits analysis and discussion. Since biblical history often is confirmed by archeology, why not confirm the reports of manna by existing natural phenomena?"[4] He concluded that the manna was really excretions of two species of insects, one found in the mountains and the other in the lowlands. Predictably, when the biblical account provides information that conflicts with his naturalistic explanation, he concluded that the biblical account is "a late and mistaken interpolation."[5] He preferred to "prove" modern naturalism by rewriting the Bible. He apparently wanted us to believe that these insects were instinctive sabbatarians: excreting double portions on the day before the sabbath, and refraining from eating or excreting on the sabbath.

2. Predictable God

For 40 years the manna came, and the younger generation could not have failed to appreciate its implications. They began to become confident in the *lawful administration* of Israel's sovereign monarch. The covenantal relationship between them and their new king—psychologically a new king in their experience—was reaffirmed each morning. *A totally supernatural, yet totally regular event reconfirmed the covenant daily*. The daily provision of the manna taught the younger

4. F. S. Bodenheimer, "The Manna of Sinai," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, X (Feb. 1947); reprinted in G. Ernest Wright and David Noel Freedman (eds.), *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1961), p. 76.

5. *Ibid*., p. 79.

generation that God is *faithful*. At the same time, the prohibition against gathering it on the seventh day, and the double portion on the sixth, taught them that God is holy. A special day of rest was set apart for the people of Israel, even as God had set them apart from Egypt in a display of His sovereign grace. Violations of the prohibition against gathering food on the sabbath were viewed by God as symbolic violations of His law in general: "And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" (Ex. 16:28).

The confidence of the younger generation in the whole of the law was built upon the observed regularities of the provision and administration of this seemingly innocuous substance. These were supernatural regularities that were not available to other wanderers in the wilderness. The Hebrews needed faith in God's ability to overcome the normal regularities of wilderness ecology—an ecology which could not sustain two to three million wanderers—as well as faith in the predictability of His providence. Manna provided a daily and weekly testimony to God's sovereign power: *providential regularity within a framework of ecological abnormality*. The curse of the ground was overcome daily, which pointed to the Author of that curse, and the power He possesses to deliver His people ethically and economically from the effects of that curse. A God who can be relied upon to overcome the laws of biology and ecology on a daily basis can also be relied upon to honor His covenantal promises to provide external blessings for those who honor His law-order.

A remnant of the wilderness experience of manna was provided by God in the land of Israel by guaranteeing a triple harvest in the year preceding that sabbatical year which preceded the jubilee year (Lev. 25:21).[6] There is no subsequent reference to the occurrence of this miraculous triple crop, probably because the Hebrews in the pre-exilic period did not honor the sabbath year principle, which is why God sent them into exile (II Chron. 36:20–21). After their return to Israel they did honor the sabbatical year, according to a non-canonical source (I Maccabees 6:49), but there is no mention of the jubilee year or to its triple harvest. It seems likely that the manna experience was the background for Christ's multiplying of the loaves in "a desert place" (Matt. 14:15–20), which was part of a ministry that He announced in terms of the jubilee year (Luke 4:18–19).[7]

6. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1994] 2012), ch. 26.

7. Gary North, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, 2nd ed.

D. Biblical Law and Conquest

This younger generation was being prepared to conquer Canaan. They had to learn two things about biblical law. First, biblical law is *personal*. Second, it is regular enough to be *predictable*. They also learned that self-discipline and faithfulness are necessary for survival, because violations of the sabbath requirements had brought criticism from God (Ex. 16:28). They learned of the *continuity of biblical law over time* (four decades) and over *geography* (wandering). God's provision of the manna created *a psychology of godly dominion*. Humble before God, and totally dependent upon His care, they could become totally confident in the face of human enemies. They expected to find a tight relationship between God's commands and God's blessings. *They learned humility before God and confidence before the creation*. "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live" (Deut. 8:3).[8]

1. Covenantal Symbol

The manna became a symbol of God's covenant with Israel. "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept" (Ex. 16:33–34). The New Testament informs us that the Ark of the Covenant contained the two tables of the law, Aaron's rod, and the golden pot that held the manna (Heb. 9:4). The manna came for 40 years, until the people crossed over the Jordan into Canaan. They kept the Passover on that day, and they ate of the old corn of the land. "And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" (Josh. 5:12). A new generation crossed over Jordan. On the day they crossed over, God "rolled away the reproach of Egypt" from the nation (Josh. 5:9). They began the process of taking possession of their heritage. They no longer needed the daily bread of manna. Hard fighting, hard work, and hard-headed commitment to biblical

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(Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 6.

8. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1999] 2012), ch. 18.

law were to replace the manna. *Their faith in the welfare state regularity of static Egypt had at last been abolished; the true welfare civilization of advancing dominion could now begin*. The regularity of law replaced the regularity of daily miracles. Responsibility under God's predictable law replaced the predictability of manna, just as predictable manna had replaced the predictability of Egyptian slavery.

Slavery is a reproach to God's people. They are to exercise dominion under God, not be dominated by servants of foreign gods. *But to escape slavery, men must switch allegiances. They must make a covenant with the God of freedom*. The exodus generation made their covenant, but they barely believed in its God or its terms. They were still mental slaves. They still clung to the supposed benefits of the bureaucratic welfare state. They still hesitated to exercise dominion. God pulled them out of Egypt's welfare state, but He did not pull the welfare state mentality out of them. The 40 years of wandering slowly pulled the next generation away from the mental chains that bound their fathers.

2. Welfare Through Miracles

There was welfare in the wilderness, but no welfare state. No bureaucracy supplied their daily bread. God was visibly the source of their welfare. This welfare, they learned, was predictable. They could rely on it, which meant that they could rely on Him. They did not need to trust in some bureaucracy for their existence. They could rest in God. And because they could rest in God, visibly, one day each week, they learned that they could rest in God on the battlefield and in the work place. Each family gathered its own manna daily (Ex. 16:16). There was precisely enough for every individual, since God, not man, was the central planner (Ex. 16:18). Once they began to rely on *God's mercy* as the source of their prosperity, and on *biblical law*, which was their tool of dominion, they could abandon the religion of their fathers, *the religion of bureaucratic welfarism*. Each man could then attend to his own affairs in confidence, even as each man had gathered up his own manna. Each man knew that he was under the direct sovereignty of God, and that his own economic prosperity was not metaphysically dependent on the state and the state's bureaucratic planning. Their fathers had never fully grasped this principle, and their fathers had perished in the wilderness.

They would no longer long for Egypt. The sons would not be burdened by memories of a welfare state existence—unreliable memories—where they supposedly had eaten "bread to the full" (Ex. 16:3). The children would no longer pine away for the food of bondage,

"the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick" (Num. 11:5). Instead, they chose the bread of diligence, the fruits of victory.

Conclusion

If there was any universal religion in the second half of the twentieth century, it was the religion of the bureaucratic welfare state. Not since the days of Egypt, said Max Weber in the first decade of the twentieth century, have we seen a bureaucracy like the ones we are constructing, nation by nation.[9] And, he might have pointed out a century later, not since the days of Egypt have we seen tax burdens like those which are universal today. In fact, neither the system of universal bureaucracy nor the system of confiscatory taxation in Egypt came anywhere near the systems the modern statist priests have imposed on their populations—populations that groan under the burdens, but who cry for more benefits, higher tax burdens on the rich, more coercive wealth redistribution, and more government programs to protect them.

If God should manifest His grace, and deliver us from bondage, we can expect the older generation to murmur against God, and tell their children about the safety in bondage and the onions of Egypt. After all, we even have Christian apologists for the present welfare state who cry out for more state programs, more redistribution, and the universalization of the welfare state system, all in the name of Jesus.[10] When the state-educated slaves come before their people to extol the benefits of the bureaucratic slave system, we can expect the slaves and their state-promoting "trusties"—the modern Christian version of the black overseers of nineteenth-century American Negro slavery—to complain against any Moses who calls them out of bondage and into responsible freedom.

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9. "Max Weber on Bureaucratization in 1909," Appendix I in J. P. Meyer, *Max Weber and German Politics: A Study in Political Sociology* (London: Faber & Faber, [1943] 1956).

10. Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977). This book had gone into its sixth printing by 1979, after only two years on the market. For a few years, its influence was very great in educated American evangelical circles. Sider wrote for the neo-evangelical community, but he was widely accepted in conservative Presbyterian circles, especially on seminary campuses. For a critique of Sider's thesis, see David Chilton, *Productive Christians in An Age of Guilt-Manipulators*, 4th ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985). By the time Chilton's third edition appeared, the Sider phenomenon had faded. Elected to a second four-year term, President Ronald Reagan spoke for evangelicals in 1985. Sider did not. Sider was a phenomenon of the short-lived leftist neoevangelical fad that faded rapidly after Reagan defeated liberal Baptist Jimmy Carter for President in 1980.

19

IMPERFECT JUSTICE

> *Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.*
>
> EXODUS 18:21–22

The Bible is not a perfectionist document. While it lays down a standard of human perfection (Gen. 17:1; I Kings 8:61; Matt. 5:48)—a standard met only by Jesus Christ (Matt. 3:17; Rom. 3:23; II Cor. 5:21)—it nonetheless acknowledges in its very law code that the administration of even a perfect law system designed by God must be understood as fallible, limited, and tainted with sin. As this passage amply demonstrates, the Bible is hostile to the humanists' quest for perfect justice on earth.

A. The Division of Labor

Under Moses' direct rule, God's revelation was instantly available in any given case. Yet there was insufficient time available for Moses to hear every case of legal dispute in the land. Perfect justice was limited by time and space. Men had to come to Moses' tent and stand in (presumably) long lines (Ex. 18:14). The quest for perfect earthly justice from God through His servant Moses was eating up countless man-hours. Not only was Moses' time limited, but so was the time of those who stood in lines.

Jethro warned Moses that the people, as well as Moses himself,

were wearing away (v. 18). He recommended the creation of a *judicial hierarchy*, thereby taking advantage of the principle of the *division of labor*. Moses could reserve time to hear the cases that were too difficult for his subordinates—"every great matter" (v. 22)—and in doing so, would redeem his allotted time more wisely by exercising leadership in areas of Hebrew life other than the court-room. Furthermore, this system would permit more rapid resolutions of disputes. Justice was to be dispensed continually—"at all seasons"—and speedily.

God gave no explicit revelation to Moses concerning the establishment of a court of appeals. It was an *ad hoc* decision based on informed common sense. Jethro, who was a priest of Midian (v. 1), must have been familiar with the problems of dispensing divine justice. He could see how large the nation of Israel was. Acknowledging the validity of the principle of scarcity—in this case, the *scarcity of time*—Jethro came to an obvious conclusion. This conclusion involved the acceptance of man's limitations. Even in this historically unique circumstance of men's access to perfect justice, it was preferable in the vast majority of cases to obtain speedy human justice rather than delayed divine justice. Human justice was at least available to everyone, while Moses' judgments were allocated by means of lining up. No one could be sure that his case would even be considered.

The scarcity of time demands a judicial division of labor. The division of labor allows men to overcome many of the restrictions imposed by scarcity in every area of life. In this case, the judge's office was broken down into many offices, with specialists at each level (one in every ten judges) who could take appeals.

The criteria for admission into the position of judge were moral rather than technical or educational. Uncovetous men (bribe-resistant), fearful of God, with reputations of truthfulness, were the preferred judges (v. 21). Ability was also important, but moral qualities were emphasized.

Consider the available judges. They had grown up as slaves. The whole generation, except for Joshua and Caleb, possessed slave mentalities. Nevertheless, their rule was preferable in most cases to a system which offered perfect justice in individual cases, but which had to ration the number of cases. Conclusion: *regular and predictable justice provided by responsible amateurs is better than perfect justice provided on a sporadic or "first in line" basis*. The burden of dispensing justice had to be shared (v. 22). This was required in order to permit the people to endure, going their way in peace (v. 23).

B. The Right of Appeal

The right of appeal was limited to "great matters." Cases involving fundamental principle, and those that would be likely to have important repercussions throughout the society, were the ones that were to be sent up the judicial chain of appeals. In order to limit the number of cases being sent to Moses for a final decision, the judges at each level must have had the right to refuse to reconsider the verdict of a lower court. If the judge did not believe that the decision of the lower court was in error, and if the higher court decided that the case was of relatively little importance as a precedent for society at large, the case was settled. Access to Moses' supreme court was restricted to great cases, and this required screening by the lower courts. Jethro understood that the limitations on Moses' time were paralyzing the justice system. Obviously, if every case considered by the lower courts eventually wound up in front of Moses, the hierarchy of courts would have provided no respite for Moses. *The screening feature of the court system was fundamental to its success*. This meant that the majority of litigants had to content themselves with something less than perfect justice.

Jethro also understood that *endless litigation threatens the survival of the system of justice*. Losers in a case clearly have an incentive to appeal, if the possibility of overturning the decision of the lower court judge offers hope. So, there has to be restraint on the part of higher court judges to refrain from constant overturning of lower court decisions. Furthermore, a society composed of people who always are going to court against each other will suffer from clogged courts and delayed justice. A society, in short, that is not governed by self-restrained people, and which does not provide other means of settling disputes besides the civil government—church courts, arbitration panels, mediation boards, industry-wide courts, and so forth—will find itself paralyzed.

Macklin Fleming was a justice of the California Court of Appeals. His book, *The Price of Perfect Justice* (1974), documented the increasing paralysis of the legal system in the United States. It is this quest for earthly perfection that has been the legal system's undoing.

> The fuel that powers the modern legal engine is the ideal of perfectibility the concept that with the expenditure of sufficient time, patience, energy, and money it is possible eventually to achieve perfect justice in all legal process. For the past twenty years this ideal has dominated legal thought, and the ideal has been widely translated into legal action. Yet a look at

> almost any specific area of the judicial process will disclose that the noble ideal has consistently spawned results that can only be described as pandemoniac. For example, in criminal prosecutions we find as long as five months spent in the selection of a jury; the same murder charge tried five different times; the same issues of search and seizure reviewed over and over again, conceivably as many as twenty-six different times; prosecutions pending a decade or more; accusations routinely sidestepped by an accused who makes the legal machinery the target instead of his own conduct.[1]

Where have modern secular humanistic courts failed? Fleming cited Lord Macaulay's rule: *the government that attempts more than it ought ends up doing less that it should*. Human law has its limits. Human courts have their limits. "The law cannot be both infinitely just and infinitely merciful; nor can it achieve both perfect form and perfect substance. These limitations were well understood in the past. But today's dominant legal theorists, impatient with selective goals, with limited objectives, and with human fallibility, have embarked on a quest for perfection in all aspects of the social order, and, in particular, perfection in legal procedure."[2]

The requirements of legal perfection, Fleming said, involve the following hypothetical conditions: totally impartial and competent tribunals, unlimited time for the defense, total factuality, total familiarity with the law, the abolition of procedural error, and the denial of the use of disreputable informants, despite the fact, as he noted, that "the strongest protection against organized thievery lies in the fact that thieves sell each other out."[3] *Costless justice theory* has adopted the slogan, "Better to free a hundred guilty men than to convict a single innocent man." But what about the costs to future victims of the hundred guilty men? The legal perfectionists refuse to count the costs of their hypothetical universe.[4]

The goal of *correct procedure* as the *only* goal worth attaining is steadily eroding both the concept of moral justice and the crucially important deterrent, a speedy punishment. Everything is to be sacrificed on the altar of technical precision. "In this way the ideal of justice is transformed into an ideal of correct procedure."[5] But the ideal is impossible to achieve perfectly, and by sacrificing all other

1. Macklin Fleming, *The Price of Perfect Justice* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 3.
2. *Ibid*., p. 4.
3. *Ibid*., p. 5.
4. *Ibid*., p. 6.
5. *Ibid*., p. 9.

goals, the cost has become astronomical. The incredible complexity of perfect procedures has led to a revival of judge-made law—judicial arbitrariness—since judges have been able to pick and choose from the morass of conflicting decisions. *Almost total legislative power has therefore been transferred to the courts*. And, as Fleming argued, the courts are not efficient in creating law. They have no staffs, little time, too many cases, and too theoretical a knowledge of the law. "Partisans are quick to furnish whatever literature will promote their cause, and a cottage industry has grown up in the preparation of the sociological brief. . . ."[6]

The whole system procrastinates: judges, defense lawyers, prosecutors, appeals courts, even the stenographic corps.[7] Speedy justice is no longer a reality. Prisoners appeal constantly to federal courts on the basis of *habeas corpus*: illegal detention because of an unconstitutional act on the part of someone, anyone. In 1940, 89 prisoners convicted in state courts made such an appeal. In 1970, the figure was 12,000.[8] Thus, concluded Fleming: "The consequence of this expansion of federal power over state criminal procedure through the creation of fiat prohibitions and rigidly ritualistic rules has been to elevate formalism to constitutional right, to complicate every significant phase of criminal procedure to the point where in some instances the system of criminal law has difficulty functioning and in others it turns loose persons who are patently guilty."[9]

C. Salvation by Law

The quest for perfect justice leads inevitably to *arbitrary jurisprudence and public lawlessness*. Joseph in Pharaoh's jail, Daniel in the lions' den, and Jesus on the cross all testify to the imperfections in human courts of law. Nevertheless, godly men can live with imperfect justice, just as they live with imperfections in all other spheres of human life, because they know that perfect justice does exist and will be made manifest on the day of judgment. Life is too short to demand perfect justice on earth; better by far to have speedy justice handed down by godly amateurs than the clogged courts of messianic humanism. We need not wring our hands in despair because men's courts, in time

6. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 97. Cf. Richard A. Posner, *The Federal Courts* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985).

and on earth, fail to meet the standards of perfection which will reign supreme in God's court. *We are not saved either by the perfect spirit of the law or the perfect letter of the law*. We are surely not saved by imperfect imitations of the spirit and letter of the law. We are not saved by law.

Salvation by law is an ancient heresy, and it leads to the triumph of statist theology. Christianity is in total opposition to this doctrine. As Rushdoony wrote: "The reality of man apart from Christ is guilt and masochism. And guilt and masochism involve an unshakable inner slavery which governs the total life of the non-Christian. The politics of the anti-Christian will thus inescapably be *the politics of guilt*. In the politics of guilt, man is perpetually drained in his social energy and cultural activity by his over-riding sense of guilt and his masochistic activity. He will progressively demand of the state a redemptive role. What he cannot do personally, i.e., to save himself, he demands that the state do for him, so that the state, as man enlarged, becomes the human savior of man. The politics of guilt, therefore, is not directed, as the Christian politics of liberty, to the creation of godly justice and order, but to the creation of a redeeming order, a saving state."[10] Christian jurisprudence cannot adopt a doctrine of the saving state and remain orthodox. The adoption of just such a concept of the state in the twentieth century testifies to the extent to which the modern world has abandoned Christian orthodoxy.

D. Jamming the System

One of the most important aspects of any legal order is the willingness of the citizens of a society to exercise self-restraint. This means that men must emphasize self-government, as well as gain access to court systems that serve as alternatives to civil government. This was a basic feature of the Western legal tradition after the mid-twelfth century, although since World War I, the rise of socialistic administrative states has begun to undermine this tradition.[11]

Self-government is not a zero-price resource. The emphasis in the Bible on training up children in the details of biblical law must be understood as a requirement of citizens to provide "social overhead capital"—respect for law and therefore self-restraint—for civilization. Another aspect of the public's respect for civil law is the *self-restraint*

10. R. J. Rushdoony, *Politics of Guilt and Pity* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1970] 1995), p. 9.

11. Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), Pt. II.

of government officials in not burdening the society with a massive, incomprehensible structure of administrative law. When civil law reaches into every aspect of the daily lives of men, the state loses a very important *subsidy from the public*, namely, men's willingness to submit voluntarily to the civil law. Any legal structure is vulnerable to the foot-dragging of the public. If men refuse to submit to regulations that cannot be enforced, one by one, by the legal system, then that system will be destroyed. Court-jamming will paralyze it. This was a familiar phenomenon in the United States in the final decades of the twentieth century.

It is possible to bring down any legal system simply by taking advantage of every legal avenue of delay. Any administrative system has procedural rules; by following these rules so closely that action on the part of the authorities becomes hopelessly bogged down in red tape (procedural details), the protestors can paralyze the system. Too many laws can produce lawlessness. The courts can no longer enforce their will on the citizens. At the same time, administrative agencies can destroy individual citizens, knowing that citizens must wait too long to receive justice in the courts. The result is a combination of anarchy and tyranny—the antinomian legacy.

This possibility of bureaucratic paralysis is characteristic of all administrative systems, even a centralized tyranny such as the Soviet Union. A classic example is the case of the Soviet dissident of the 1960s and early 1970s, Vladimir Bukovsky. Bukovsky spent well over a decade in the Soviet gulag concentration camp system. He was arrested and sentenced in spite of specific civil rights protections provided by the Soviet Constitution—a document that was never respected by the Soviet bureaucracy. But, once in prison, he learned to make life miserable for the director of his camp. He learned that written complaints had to be responded to officially within a month. This administrative rule governing the camps was for "Western consumption," but it was nevertheless a rule. Any camp administrator who failed to honor it risked the possibility of punishment, should a superior or an ambitious subordinate decide to pressure him for any reason. In short, any failure to "do it by the book" could be used against him later on.

Bukovsky became an assembly-line producer of official protests. By the end of his career as a "zek," he had taught hundreds of other inmates to follow his lead. By following certain procedures that were specified by the complaint system, Bukovsky's protesting army be-

gan to disrupt the whole Soviet bureaucracy. His camp clogged the entire system with protests—hundreds of them per day. He estimates that eventually the number of formal complaints exceeded 75,000. To achieve such a phenomenal output, the protestors had to adopt the division of labor. Bukovsky described the process: "At the height of our war, each of us wrote from ten to thirty complaints a day. Composing thirty complaints in one day is not easy, so we usually divided up the subjects among ourselves and each man wrote on his own subject before handing it around for copying by all the others. If there are five men in a cell and each man takes six subjects, each of them has the chance to write thirty complaints while composing only six himself."[12] The complaints were addressed to prominent individuals and organizations: the deputies of the Supreme Soviet, the regional directors, astronauts, actors, generals, admirals, the secretaries of the Central Committee, shepherds, sportsmen, and so forth. "In the Soviet Union, all well-known individuals are state functionaries."[13] Each complaint had to be responded to. The camp administrators grew frantic. They threatened punishments, and often imposed them, but it did no good; the ocean of protests grew. Bukovsky's description is incomparable:

> The next thing that happens is that the prison office, inundated with complaints, is unable to dispatch them within the three-day deadline. For overrunning the deadline they are bound to be reprimanded and to lose any bonuses they might have won. When our war was at its hottest the prison governor summoned every last employee to help out at the office with this work—librarians, bookkeepers, censors, political instructors, security officers. And it went even further. All the students at the next-door Ministry of the Interior training college were pressed into helping out as well.
>
> All answers to and dispatches of complaints have to be registered in a special book, and strict attention has to be paid to observing the correct deadlines. Since complaints follow a complex route and have to be registered every step of the way, they spawn dossiers and records of their own. In the end they all land in one of two places: the local prosecutor's office or the local department of the Interior Ministry. These offices can't keep up with the flood either and also break their deadlines, for which they too are reprimanded and lose their bonuses. The bureaucratic machine is thus obliged to work at full stretch, and you transfer the paper avalanche from one office to another, sowing panic in the ranks of the enemy. Bureaucrats are bureaucrats, always at loggerheads with one another, and often

12. Vladimir Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle: My Life As a Dissident* (New York: Viking, 1979), p. 37.

13. *Idem*.

> enough your complaints become weapons in internecine wars between bureaucrat and bureaucrat, department and department. This goes on for months and months, until, at last, the most powerful factor of all in Soviet life enters the fray—statistics.[14]

As the 75,000 complaints became part of the statistical record, the statistical record of the prison camp and the regional camps was spoiled. All bureaucrats suffered. There went the prizes, pennants, and other benefits. "The workers start seething with discontent, there is panic in the regional Party headquarters, and a senior commission of inquiry is dispatched to the prison."[15] The commission then discovered a mass of shortcomings with the work of the prison's administration, although the commission would seldom aid specific prisoners. The prisoners knew this in advance. But the flood of protests continued for two years. "The entire bureaucratic system of the Soviet Union found itself drawn into this war. There was virtually no government department or institution, no region or republic, from which we weren't getting answers. Eventually we had even drawn the criminal cons into our game, and the complaints disease began to spread throughout the prison—in which there were twelve hundred men altogether. I think that if the business had continued a little longer and involved everyone in the prison, the Soviet bureaucratic machine would have simply ground to a halt: all Soviet institutions would have had to stop work and busy themselves with writing replies to US."[16]

Finally, in 1977, they capitulated to several specific demands of the prisoners to improve the conditions of the camps. The governor of the prison was removed and pensioned off.[17] Their ability to inflict death-producing punishments did them little good, once the prisoners learned of the Achilles' heel of the bureaucracy: paperwork. The leaders of the Soviet Union could bear it no longer: they deported Bukovsky. Subsequently, according to one Soviet defector, the Soviets had to scrap the Constitution once again (unofficially, of course) in the area of protection of free speech.[18] Dissidents were again subjected to long-term incarceration in psychiatric hospitals, just as they were before Bukovsky and other dissidents organized their protesting

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 37–38.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 38–39.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
17. *Idem.*
18. He appeared on the Cable News Network in February, 1984.

techniques, both inside and outside the Gulag.[19] As Bukovsky noted, "they wrote a Constitution with a plethora of rights and freedoms that they simply couldn't afford to grant, rightly supposing that nobody would be reckless enough to insist on them being observed."[20] Nevertheless, when internal dissidents and external observers put the pressure of formal paperwork on the ruling elite, they sometimes capitulated.

E. Centralization and the Declining Respect for Law

Economist Milton Friedman suggested that the respect for law that prevails in capitalist societies is closely related to the absence of comprehensive, detailed administrative regulations. The British experience of the nineteenth century provides Friedman with a case study of the public's response to civil law.

In the early nineteenth century, British citizens were notorious law-breakers. They were a nation of smugglers, ready to offer bribes, ready to take advantage of every inefficiency in the law-enforcement system. Very little could be accomplished through legal channels. Friedman said that one of the reasons why Jeremy Bentham and the Utilitarians were hostile to civil government and adopted laissez-faire doctrines in the early nineteenth century was because they recognized that civil government was completely inefficient. "The government was corrupt and inefficient. It was clearly oppressive. It was something that had to be gotten out of the way as a first step to reform. The fundamental philosophy of the Utilitarians, or any philosophy that puts its emphasis on some kind of a sum of utilities, however loose may be the expression, does not lead to *laisser-faire* in principle. It leads to whatever kind of organization of economic activity is thought to produce results which are regarded as good in the sense of adding to the sum total of utilities. I think the major reason why the Utilitarians tended to be in favor of *laisser-faire* was the obvious fact that government was incompetent to perform any of the tasks they wanted to see performed."[21] (Friedman's assertion that Utilitar-

19. On the use of mental hospitals as substitute prisons, see Zhores Medvedev and Roy Medvedev, *A Question of Madness: Repression by Psychiatry in the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1971); Sidney Bloch and Peter Reddaway, *Psychiatric Terror: How Soviet Psychiatry Is Used to Suppress Dissent* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

20. Bukovsky, *To Build a* Castle, p. 239.

21. Milton Friedman, "Is a Free Society Stable?" *New Individualist Review*, II (Summer 1962); reprinted in one volume by the Liberty Press, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1981, p. 245.

ianism was not philosophically attached to the free market social order is borne out by the fact that many British Utilitarians in the late nineteenth century were ready to advocate government regulation in order to produce "the greatest good for the greatest number"—a reversal of the conclusions of the early Utilitarians, but not a reversal of their pragmatic philosophy.)[22]

Friedman went on to make some extremely important observations concerning what he calls *the capital stock of people's willingness to obey the law*. First, there must be an increase in people's respect for civil law through a reduction of the number of burdensome regulations. Second, there is an increase in the number of such laws, since politicians and bureaucrats begin to take advantage of the citizens' willingness to co-operate with the state. This, in turn, reduces the ability of the state planners to achieve their publicly announced goals. There are therefore *limits to centralization*.

> Whatever the reason for its appeal, the adoption of *laisser-faire* had some important consequences. Once *laisser-faire* was adopted, the economic incentive for corruption was largely removed. After all, if governmental officials had no favors to grant, there was no need to bribe them. And if there was nothing to be gained from government, it could hardly be a source of corruption. Moreover, the laws that were left were for the most part—and again, I am oversimplifying and exaggerating—laws that were widely accepted. as proper and desirable; laws against theft, robbery, murder, etc. This is in sharp contrast to a situation in which the legislative structure designates as crimes what people individually do not regard as crimes or makes it illegal for people to do what seems to them the sensible thing. The latter situation tends to reduce respect for the law. One of the unintended and indirect effects of *laisser-faire* was thus to establish a climate in Britain of a much greater degree of obedience and respect for the law than had existed earlier. Probably there were other forces at work in this development, but I believe that the establishment of *laisser-faire* laid the groundwork for a reform in the civil service in the latter part of the century—the establishment of a civil service chosen on the basis of examinations and merit of professional competence. You could get that kind of development because the incentives to seek such places for purposes of exerting "improper" influence were greatly reduced when government had few favors to confer.
>
> In these ways, the development of laisser-faire laid the groundwork for a widespread respect for the law, on the one hand, and a relatively incor-

22. Ellen Frankel Paul, *Moral Revolution and Economic Science: The Demise of Laissez-Faire in Nineteenth-Century British Political Philosophy* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979).

rupt, honest, and efficient civil service on the other, both of which are essential preconditions for the operation of a collectivist society. In order for a collectivist society to operate, the people must obey the laws and there must be a civil service that can and will carry out the laws. The success of capitalism established these preconditions for a movement in the direction of much greater state intervention.

The process I have described obviously runs both ways. A movement in the direction of a collectivist society involves increased governmental intervention into the daily lives of people and the conversion into crimes of actions. that are regarded by the ordinary person as entirely proper. These tend in turn to undermine respect for the law and to give incentives to corrupt state officials. There can, I think, be little doubt that this process has begun in Britain and has gone a substantial distance. Although respect for the law may still be greater than it is here [the United States], most observers would agree that respect for the law in Britain has gone down decidedly in the course of the last twenty or thirty years, certainly since the war [World War II], as a result of the kind of laws people have been asked to obey.... The erosion of the capital stock of willingness to obey the law reduces the capacity of a society to run a centralized state, to move away from freedom. This effect on law obedience is. thus one that is reversible and runs in both directions....

This seems to me an important point. Once the government embarks on intervention into and regulation of private activities, this establishes an incentive for large numbers of individuals to use their ingenuity to find ways to get around the government regulations. One result is that there appears to be a lot more regulation than there really is. Another is that the time and energy of government officials is increasingly taken up with the need to plug the holes in the regulations that the citizens are finding, creating, and exploiting. From this point of view, Parkinson's law about the growth of bureaucracy without a corresponding growth of output may be a favorable feature for the maintenance of a free society. An efficient governmental organization and not an inefficient one is almost surely the greater threat to a free society. One of the virtues of a free society is precisely that the market tends to be a more efficient organizing principle than centralized direction. Centralized direction in this way is always having to fight something of a losing battle.[23]

Conclusion

What we can and should strive for is to conform our human law codes to the explicit requirements of the Ten Commandments and the case-law applications of biblical law. The answer to our legal crisis is not to be found in the hypothetical perfection of formal law, nor can it

23. Friedman, pp. 245–47. I read it as an undergraduate. I never forgot it.

be found in the hypothetical perfection of substantive (ethical) justice. Judges will make errors, but these errors can be minimized by placing them within the framework of biblical law. Before God gave the nation of Israel a comprehensive system of law, Jethro gave Israel a comprehensive system of decentralized courts. By admitting the impossibility of the goal for earthly perfect justice, Moses made possible the reign of imperfectly applied revealed law—perfect in principle, but inevitably flawed in application. The messianic goal of a perfect law-order, in time and on earth, was denied to Moses and his successors.

One of the most obvious failures of the modern administrative civil government system is its quest for perfect justice and perfect control over the details of economic life. The implicit assertion of omniscience on the part of the central planners is economically fatal. The result of such an assertion is an increase of regulations, increased confusion among both rulers and ruled, and a growing disrespect for civil law. The productivity of the West cannot be maintained in the face of such an exponential build-up of central power. It is only because the laws are not consistent, nor universally enforced or obeyed, that the modern messianic state has survived. The price of perfect human justice is too high to be achieved by the efforts of men.

20

THE OATH-BOUND KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

> *And Moses went up unto God, and the* Lord *called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*
>
> EXODUS 19:3–6

The theocentric principle here is the oath: point four of the biblical covenant.[1]

God told Moses to tell the people of Israel that they must covenant with Him. He had delivered them out of the house of bondage. Meredith G. Kline identified this as point two of the Near Eastern treaty model: the sovereign's announcement of his mighty works in history. He called this "historical prologue."[2] I associate point two mainly with the covenant itself. The Book of Exodus is the book of the covenant. "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Ex. 24:7). It is the second book of the Pentateuch, which in turn is structured in terms of the five points.

Who was this God who had delivered them? The owner of all

1. Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992), ch. 4. Cf. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 5th ed. (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2010), ch. 4.

2. Mededith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1963). The is reprinted in Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1972).

the earth: "for all the earth is mine." Here, God identifies His sovereignty with His comprehensive ownership. Ownership is associated with boundaries: point three of the biblical covenant. The sanctity of God's name (third commandment)[3] is associated with the commandment against theft (eighth commandment).[4]

Priests are mediators between God and man. They are representatives. It is appropriate that the identification of the Israelites as a kingdom of priests should complete Part 1 of this commentary on Exodus, which is the story of rival claims of representation: God vs. Pharaoh.[5]

Israel would henceforth serve as a representative priesthood for the whole world. This was an aspect of God's common grace.[6] God preserved the world for the sake of His people: the division of labor. God's people are given greater productivity and therefore greater income because of the specialized efforts of people who are outside the covenant of redemption. The general dominion covenant still binds all mankind. At the same time, He preserved his people for the sake of the world: the priestly function. Representation is always hierarchical: upward and downward.

The tribe of Levi was the priestly tribe for the priestly nation. The family of Aaron served as the high priests. They officiated at the sanctuary, i.e., the judicially set-apart place where the sacrifices to God were made.

> And the Lord said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you (Num. 18:1–4).

An important aspect of this office of priest was the tithe.[7] The tithe is paid by lower priests to higher priests. At the time of Israel's oath,

3. Chapter 23.
4. Chapter 28.
5. I did not see this when I wrote *Moses and Pharaoh* (1985).
6. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987).
7. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 10.

there was not yet a higher priesthood to receive the tithes of the kingdom of priests. God designated this priesthood only after the golden calf incident: the tribe of Levi. After Israel inherited the land of Canaan, members of the other tribes paid 10% of their agricultural produce to the Levites, who in turn paid 10% to the priests who officiated at the temple.[8]

> And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation (Num. 18:20–21).

> Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe. And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress. Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD's heave offering to Aaron the priest (Num. 18:26–28).

The tithe system applied only to the priests. The world outside the land of Israel did not tithe to Israel. Why not? Because covenant-breakers outside the Promised Land were not priests.

The reason why the requirement to tithe applies to Christians is because God has designated them as priests.[9]

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). As priests, they are required to pay a tenth to the local church, which represents them before God. The judicial marks of this representation are the sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Conclusion

God established a kingdom of priests at Mt. Sinai. The people voluntarily covenanted themselves to God by a formal act of ratification. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD" (Ex. 19:8).

8. *Ibid.*, ch. 10.
9. Gary North, *The Covenant Tithe* (Powder Springs, Georgia: American Vision, 2011).

This formal act of covenantal ratification to the God who owns the earth, who was the God who had delivered them, established the national covenant. It also made mandatory a system of tithes.

CONCLUSION

And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord *overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the* Lord *saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the* Lord *did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the* Lord*, and believed the* Lord*, and his servant Moses.*

EXODUS 14:27–31

When Moses and the Israelites looked behind them from the eastern shore of the Red Sea and saw the army of Egypt overwhelmed by the water, they saw the judgment of God on the power religion and its institutional manifestation, the power state. They had been involved in an historic confrontation analogous to the original confrontation between Satan and God. They had been given visible evidence of the inescapable outcome of this confrontation between these two rival religions: in heaven, in the garden, at the cross, and at the final judgment. The power religion does not have the power to defeat a holy God and His holy people, whenever they conform themselves to the terms of His covenant. Seeking power, the power religionists lose it—in time, on earth, and in eternity.

Nevertheless, the victory of God's people, while assured, is not visibly manifested in every confrontation. Herbert Schlossberg was correct: "The Bible can be interpreted as a string of God's triumphs disguised as disasters."[1] As he said, "We need a theological interpre-

1. Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction: Christian Faith and Its Confrontation with American Society* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, [1983] 1993), p. 304.

tation of disaster, one that recognizes that God acts in such events as captivities, defeats, and crucifixions."[2] It often seems as though the power religionists—the seekers of gnostic salvation, the elite central planners—have all power. They don't. "Never ask the enlightened ones about their track record, which is a series of disguised disasters. . . ."[3] Most of Christianity's victories have been disguised in the past, and so have most of Satan's disasters.

The Hebrews' experience in Egypt testified to a truth summarized by Schlossberg: "When loyalty to God disappears, there is no longer a barrier to an omnicompetent state."[4] But the self-professed omnicompetent state isn't omnicompetent; it is progressively incompetent, as Egypt's experience reveals. Such a state is simply the chief institutional manifestation of covenant-breaking man's attempt to imitate, and then usurp, the omnipotence of God. But omnipotence is an incommunicable attribute of God. Therefore, the only possible source of man's long-term but limited power is biblical ethics. Adherence to biblical law, by grace through faith, is the only means of fulfilling the terms of the dominion covenant.

Thus, there is no need for Christians to become adherents of the escapist religion in order to avoid becoming adherents of the power religion. *The dominion religion is God's authorized alternative*. "We do not pretend that the fate of the world is in our hands. That way lies madness, being a burden that no human being can bear. Yet, we are not condemned to resignation and quietism, still less to despair. We are not the lords of history and do not control its outcome, but we have assurance that there is a lord of history and he controls its outcome."[5]

I cite Schlossberg repeatedly because his book, more than any other in my lifetime, has best stated the theological case against the power religion.[6] (Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* has best stated the historical case.) The idols of covenant-breaking man—history, humanity, mammon, nature, power, and religion—again and again reappear in the civilizations built by self-professed autonomous man. All idols, he asserted, are either idols of history or idols of nature.[7] Covenant-breaking man asserts his authority over both nature and history, but because

2. *Idem*.
3. *Ibid*., p. 195.
4. *Ibid*., p. 229.
5. *Ibid*., p. 304.
6. I wrote this in 1985, two years after his book was published. I have not changed my opinion.
7. *Ibid*., p. 11.

man is a creature, mankind is thereby captured, for mankind is, in the humanist view, both a product of history and a product of nature. By seeking power over both, covenant-breaking people place themselves in bondage to the self-professed masters of the mysteries. By asserting that "man must take control of man," the humanist thereby implicitly asserts that "some men should take control over all the others." By seeking to exercise dominion apart from God, ethical rebels thereby deny their own creaturehood and therefore their status as humans.[8]

Egypt is the archetype of covenant-breaking society. It proclaimed divinity for its leader, the sole link between the gods and mankind. It sought escape from the rigors of nature (drought and famine) and the rigors of history (change). The goal was static power—power over nature, over the netherworld, and over scarcity. But such a static state of existence can be achieved only in death. Thus, *the monuments of Egypt were monuments of death*: the pyramids, the tombs, and the labyrinths. Their *quest for power*, meaning freedom from the God-cursed changes in life, led to their *cult of the dead*. The Egyptians hoped for resurrection, but theirs was a resurrection based on magical manipulation, not a resurrection based on biblical ethics.

Pharaoh manifested this cult of the dead in his attempt to murder the Hebrew males. He could not stand the pressures of social change, particularly the social changes forced upon Egypt by the high birth rates of the Hebrews. He launched a program of genocide. In this respect, he was only marginally different from the humanitarians of the twentieth century. As Schlossberg said:

> It is no coincidence that humanitarian policy has reached the zenith of its influence at a time when death propaganda is so much in evidence. The arguments in favor of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia reveal that the humanitarian ethic wishes to restrict the right to live and expand the right to die—and to kill. Humanism is a philosophy of death. It embraces death, wishes a good death, speaks of the horrible burdens of living for the baby who is less than perfect, for the sick person in pain. It is intolerable to live, cruel to be forced to live, but blessed to die. It is unfair to have to care for the helpless, and therefore merciful to kill. Those who wish to go on living, it seems, are guilty and ungrateful wretches dissipating the energies of 'loved ones' who have better uses for the estate than paying medical bills.[9]

God confronted the Egyptian religion of death by calling into question its assertion of power. He dealt with Pharaoh, his priests,

8. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947).
9. Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, p. 82.

and his people in terms of their religious presuppositions. He demonstrated publicly for all the world to see that the power religion of Egypt was a fraud. Pharaoh had no choice in the matter. God decided to make a spectacle out of him and out of Egypt. "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Ex. 9:16).

The Hebrews had this example behind them. They were to remind themselves and their children of the implications of the power religion. This was the educational function of Passover. It was an institutional testimony to the futility of seeking power apart from biblical law. It is therefore futile to seek to fulfill the terms of the dominion covenant apart from God. It is equally futile to attempt to escape from the burdens of this covenant. Such an escape leads directly to historical impotence and slavery under some temporarily successful group of power religionists. Better to be Moses herding sheep in Midian than anywhere in Egypt, either as a Hebrew or as a Pharaoh. Better yet to be Moses confronting Pharaoh. Even better, to be Moses on the far side of the Red Sea watching Pharaoh drown. Better yet, to be in the Promised Land, with a copy of God's law in your possession. But, best of all, to be at work in the wilderness, progressively converting it into a garden by means of hard work, in terms of the biblical law which is in your heart, and also in the hearts of all your neighbors (Ezek. 36:26–29; Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 8:10–11).